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“I’ve never been disappointed by the riding all around the region. I’ve ridden it on sportsbikes, naked, cruisers, sports tourers, tourers and adventurers, and always found a pace and a mindset that matched me, the bike and the route”

The Hunter Valley has a ride for everyone and every machine. Read all about it on page 106.

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MICK MATHESON

FACE TIME

**BE IT FOR COMFORT OR SAFETY,
THE HELMET YOU WEAR IS YOUR CHOICE**

Open-face helmets and wasps. Or bees. Or flying ants. Even rocks and other inanimate objects that have been animated. Yes indeed. Not pleasant.

My face is slightly swollen, kind of achy and unbearably itchy right now. Something went thwack on the leading edge of the helmet's lining and ended up inside, crawling across my ear and prompting the immediate reaction to jam a gloved finger up there and get it out. So it stung me on the ear. Ouch. Ouch! Bloody *ouch!*

Literally a minute earlier I'd had the cruise control on and my arms out *Easy Rider* style ("If you wanna be a bird ..." only without the inhaled influences). It was one of those rides — beautiful day, open road, awesome big V-twin thumping beneath me. Life was pure joy. Riding was the only thing that mattered. I wanted it to last forever. You know, I'd even been thinking how nice it'd be to ditch the helmet, although that train of thought then led me to ponder how much a helmet feels normal these days, like the reflexiveness of putting on a seat belt when you jump in a car.

THEN OUCH!

There's always something to bring you back to reality, isn't there? Two days later I'm still suffering. As soon as it happened I thought of Adam Bennett's letter in *ARR* #118. He made the point that using a full-face isn't always a matter of safety, it can be about comfort. He's right, of course.

It's not the first time I've been punished for my open-face fetish. This is the third sting on the face. Two rock hits, too, one of them significant but no more than painful. But I've had bees and a wasp fly into a full-face helmet in

the past, though for some reason I was lucky enough not to be stung. I've been stung on the neck when a bee came in below a full-face's chin piece. Once I was stung right between the eyes just after I'd lifted my full-face helmet off my head. Couldn't believe that one.

I've been stung and bitten by things that have shot up my sleeve while riding, and I've copped a wasp's venom through a pair of jeans while riding. So a full-face hasn't always been the protective panacea I needed. If you ride, chances are you're going to get stung one day, one way or another.

By the same token, a full-face isn't always going to be the saviour you might need. Statistically, yes, a full-face does reduce deaths and injuries compared with wearing an

open-face. I won't bore you with all the stats here (and frankly, there is not yet any hard and fast answer for how much safer the former is compared with the latter), but a few points are worth mentioning.

In a fifth of crashes where a rider's head is hit hard, the impact is to the chin or face, when an open-face offers no protection, and in these cases it seems the likelihood of brain injury is almost as high as if you had no helmet. On the other hand, an excessively heavy full-face can present too high a risk of injuring the base of the skull if the chin piece takes the impact, which can kill you. In non-fatal crashes where injury occurs, you're about twice as likely to injure your face while wearing an open-face, but the

risk overall is low anyway (eight per cent of injured riders with open-face helmets suffer facial injuries, according to a Monash Uni study).

Whatever we do, we're riders and there's always risk. In some situations I'll only wear a full-face, but there are plenty of other times when I love my open-face. Ever since I started riding I've owned a full-face and an open-face. Rain, hail, vicious insects and flying rocks are not conducive to open-face freedom, but the risks are low and the discomforts rarely lasting.

Adam was right. Sometimes it's a matter of comfort, sometimes safety. But he missed the point that sometimes it's simply a matter of choice. **ARR**

"It's not the first time I've been punished for my open-face fetish."



"Just glide there through the clear air ... where the face and stinging wasp meet"

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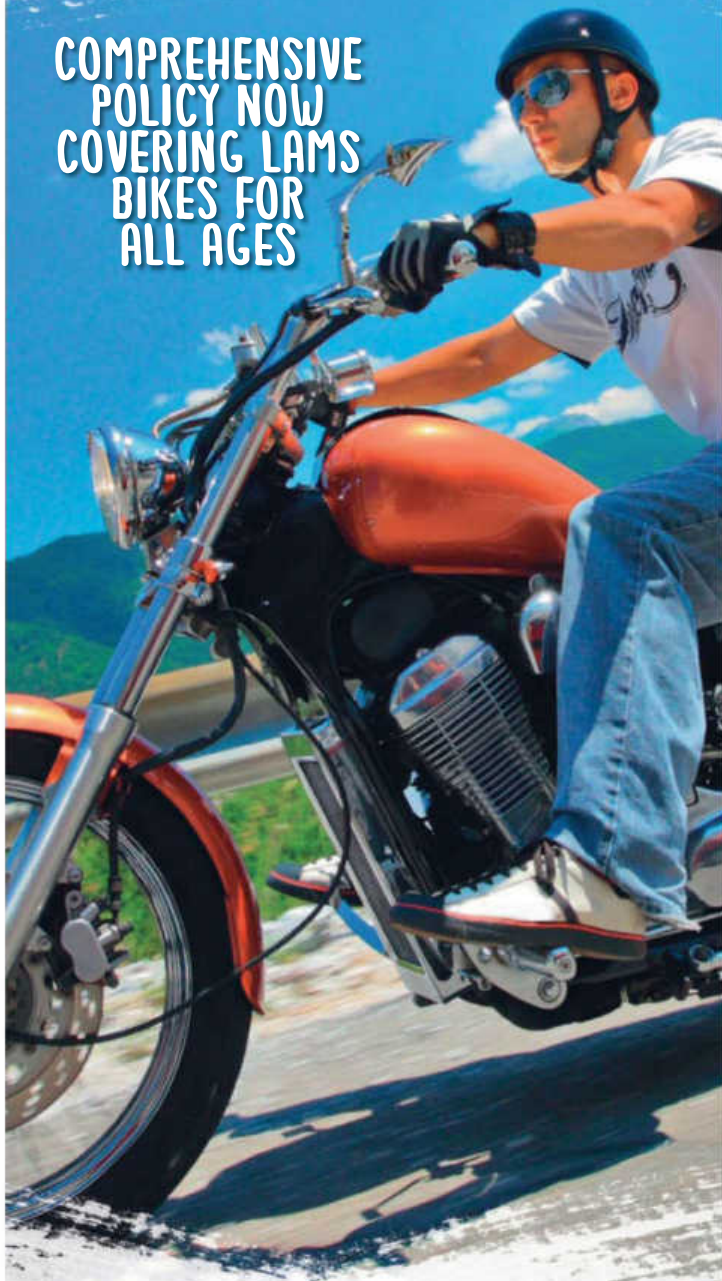
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NEWS FOR ROADRIDERS

AUSTRALIA'S MOST WANTED

Survey of riders finds the top brands

Harley-Davidson motorcycles, Nolan helmets, Dririder jackets and gloves, and Michelin tyres are the top-rated motorcycle brands in Australia, according to a customer satisfaction research and ratings business. Canstar Blue surveyed more than 700 bikers across the country and included brands in five different categories where there was a minimum of 30 responses.

Harley-Davidson led a field of eight brands to ride off with Canstar Blue's Most Satisfied Customers Award for motorcycles, scoring five-star ratings in regards to comfort, reliability and mileage, as well as overall customer satisfaction, which is a separate rating, not a compilation of the other ratings.

Head of Canstar Blue, Megan Doyle, says Harley-Davidson is one of the most recognisable brands in the world. "Harley-Davidson motorcycles come with huge expectations, but it seems they are being met," she says.

BMW, Ducati, Honda and Triumph scored four-star overall satisfaction ratings, while the other three Japanese models scored three. Maximum

five-star ratings were recorded by Honda for value for money, mileage and reliability, Ducati for handling and after-sales service, and BMW for after-sales service.

The survey found the average spend on motorcycles to be \$9912, with one in four respondents using a bike loan or financing to pay. And the average age at which respondents bought their first motorcycle was 21.

A significant 58 per cent own a bike because riding is their hobby, 45 per cent cited cheaper running costs as a reason, and 12 per cent wanted to join a social group. Ten per cent said their bike makes them "feel sexy".

The award for motorcycle helmets went to Nolan, which beat seven other brands with a clean sweep of top ratings across the board. The survey found the average spend on helmets to be \$380 and one in four (24 per cent) respondents said they have bought a helmet online. Just 16 per cent said they have bought a helmet from overseas and 14 per cent have used a helmet that has been previously damaged.

The awards for motorcycle gloves and jackets

both went to Dririder, which achieved a near-perfect set of results across both categories. The survey found the average spend on gloves to be \$168 and jackets to be \$356.

"Just one in four motorcyclists opt for the cheapest available gloves, which tells you they are happy to spend a good amount if they know they're getting quality," says Megan. "The same applies to jackets because more than anything else, bikers want a jacket that fits comfortably and gives them the protection they need. Dririder is clearly meeting their expectations." With a wide variety of jacket brands on the market, only two received more than the minimum of 30 responses.

Michelin achieved top marks in five out of six criteria. That adds to Michelin's Canstar Blue award success for car tyres. Survey respondents spent an average of \$308 when they last bought a new motorcycle tyre, with one in five (20 per cent) opting for the cheapest available.

"Ultimately consumers want good handling and longevity from their tyres, but they're also conscious of paying more than they have to," says Megan. "Three out of five survey respondents are wary of being ripped off when they buy tyres, which probably helps explain why 32 per cent delay buying new tyres for as long as they can."

HELMETS

Brand	Overall satisfaction*	Value for money	Comfort	Fit	Ease of cleaning	Durability	Noise dampening	Vision
Nolan	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★
AGV	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Arai	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Bell Helmets	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Shark	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Shoei	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Fox	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Blacks	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

* Overall satisfaction is an individual rating and not a combined total of all ratings



MOTORCYCLES

Brand	Overall satisfaction*	Value for money	Handling	Comfort	Mileage	Reliability	After sales service
Harley-Davidson	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
BMW	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Ducati	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Honda	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★★	★★★★
Triumph	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Kawasaki	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Suzuki	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Yamaha	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

* Overall satisfaction is an individual rating and not a combined total of all ratings



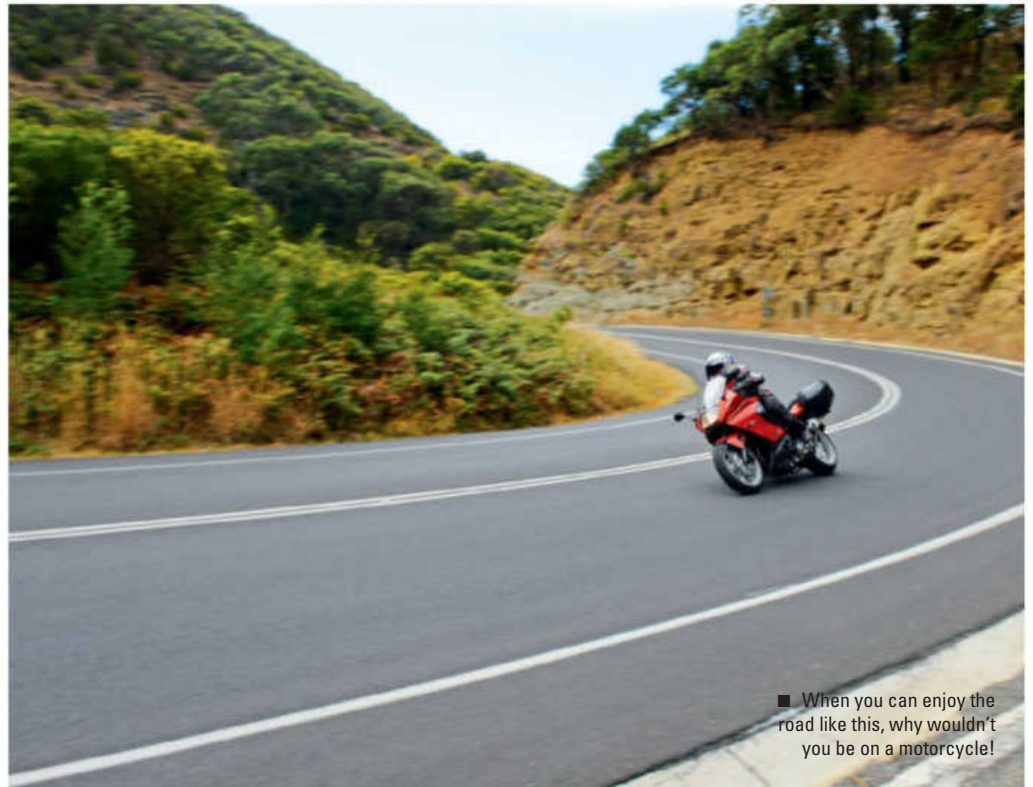
BIKE REGOS SKYROCKET

Motorcycles are the fastest-growing form of transport in Australia

Motorcycle registrations have increased by 22.3 per cent in the past five years, according to the Motor Vehicle Census. Registrations stood at 807,215, compared with 660,107 in 2010 and 780,174 in 2014, which is an annual growth rate of 4.3 per cent. That compares with light rigid trucks at 4.1 per cent, campervans 3.9 per cent and light commercials 3.5 per cent.

Motorcycles represent 4.5 per cent of the more than 18 million registered vehicles in Australia and over the past five years the average age of bikes has increased by one year.

Top two-wheel state is NSW with 222,111 registrations, followed by Queensland with 187,167, while Western Australia and Tasmania have recorded the highest growth rates, up 35.4 and 30.2 respectively.



■ When you can enjoy the road like this, why wouldn't you be on a motorcycle!

JACKETS

Brand	Overall satisfaction*	Value for money	Comfort	Fit	Protection	Durability	Functionality
Dririder	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Racer	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Riays	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Alpinestars	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Dainese	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

* Overall satisfaction is an individual rating and not a combined total of all ratings



GLOVES

Brand	Overall satisfaction*	Value for money	Comfort	Fit	Protection	Durability	Functionality	Style
Dririder	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Olympia	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★

* Overall satisfaction is an individual rating and not a combined total of all ratings

TYRES

Brand	Overall satisfaction*	Value for money	Life of tyre	Wet weather handling	Dry weather handling	Stopping ability
Michelin	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Bridgestone	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Metzeler	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Pirelli	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
Dunlop	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★

* Overall satisfaction is an individual rating and not a combined total of all ratings



INDIAN MOTORCYCLE BIRTHPLACE FOUND

“The factory where the prototype was made was on a now-closed section of Hamlin Street on property belonging to Wesleyan University”

The birthplace of the first Indian motorcycle is not Springfield, Massachusetts, but Middletown, Connecticut, according to a local historian. In an attempt to get Indian to locate a dealership in the town, Chris Hinze started researching the location for the first prototype Indian motorcycle and found that it was built in Middletown.

He claims the factory where the prototype was made was on a now-closed section of Hamlin Street on property belonging to Wesleyan University. His discovery has been verified by university archivists and the site now features a commemorative plaque.

The origins of the first Indian trace back to company co-founder Carl Oscar Hedstrom, who used to race bicycles and built “pacers”, which are motorised bicycles used for cycling races. Businessman George Mallory Hendee contracted Hedstrom to make the prototype. Hedstrom rented a building and equipment for \$1 a day in the Worcester Cycle Manufacturing Co, 24 Hamlin Street, where he built the bike in May 1901. It was then shipped to Hendee in

Springfield, Massachusetts, and the two became business partners.

Indian Motorcycle flourished for several decades, but lost the lucrative military contract to Harley-Davidson during World War II and faltered, going bankrupt in 1953. Several different owners tried to revive the brand over the years with limited success until Polaris Industries

bought it in 2011, moved the factory from North Carolina to Iowa and relaunched the brand.

While its new home is in Spirit Lake and the spiritual home is Springfield Massachusetts, it now seems the true birthplace of Indian Motorcycle is Middletown, Connecticut.



■ A uni building with a lot of history

VIVALA TOUR OPERATION!

Cuba opens up to motorcycle tours

Adventure seekers have a new destination to explore by motorbike, with motorcycle tour company Extreme Bike Tours launching its first Cuban tour in 2016. It will be the first tour outside Asia offered by the company since it was started by Zander Combe in 2011.

His company will offer 13-day tours from February 21 and March 6, 2016, with small groups of riders on Harley-Davidsons, Suzuki V-Stroms and BMW 800s.

The exotic Caribbean island has recently eased relations with the US, so now is the perfect time to explore the time-warped country with its colonial buildings, cigar factories, salsa clubs and 1950s American classic motorbikes and automobiles before it is spoiled by tourists.

“It has about five years left before it becomes Disneyland and we wanted to get in there now before it’s destroyed from a tourism point of view,” Zander says. “It’s the most magical country and it will change rapidly.”

The Extreme Bike Tours groups will visit

rural villages, the museum at the Bay of Pigs and the mausoleum of executed Marxist revolutionary, Che Guevara, with an optional ride to Guantanamo also available.

The guided 13-day trip will include about four to six hours of riding each day, and is open to licensed motorcyclists as well as pillion passengers riding on a bike or in the support vehicle.

The tour costs US\$5975 per rider or US\$4250 per pillion passenger and includes accommodation, seven dinners, three lunches, fuel and motorbike hire, but not international flights. Extreme Bike Tours offers itineraries to the Himalayas, Tibet, Bhutan, Rajasthan, southern India and Mongolia. Zander says they will also offer tours of Sri Lanka in July and August 2016.

“We’re called Extreme Bike Tours because of the locations we go to, not the way we ride or anything else,” he says. “Anyone who is a confident rider on a licence can come on our tours. It’s about the location rather than riding

around trying to kill ourselves.”

He says they also have a lot of pillions on their rides with the five-star tours having about 60 per cent of riders with a passenger.

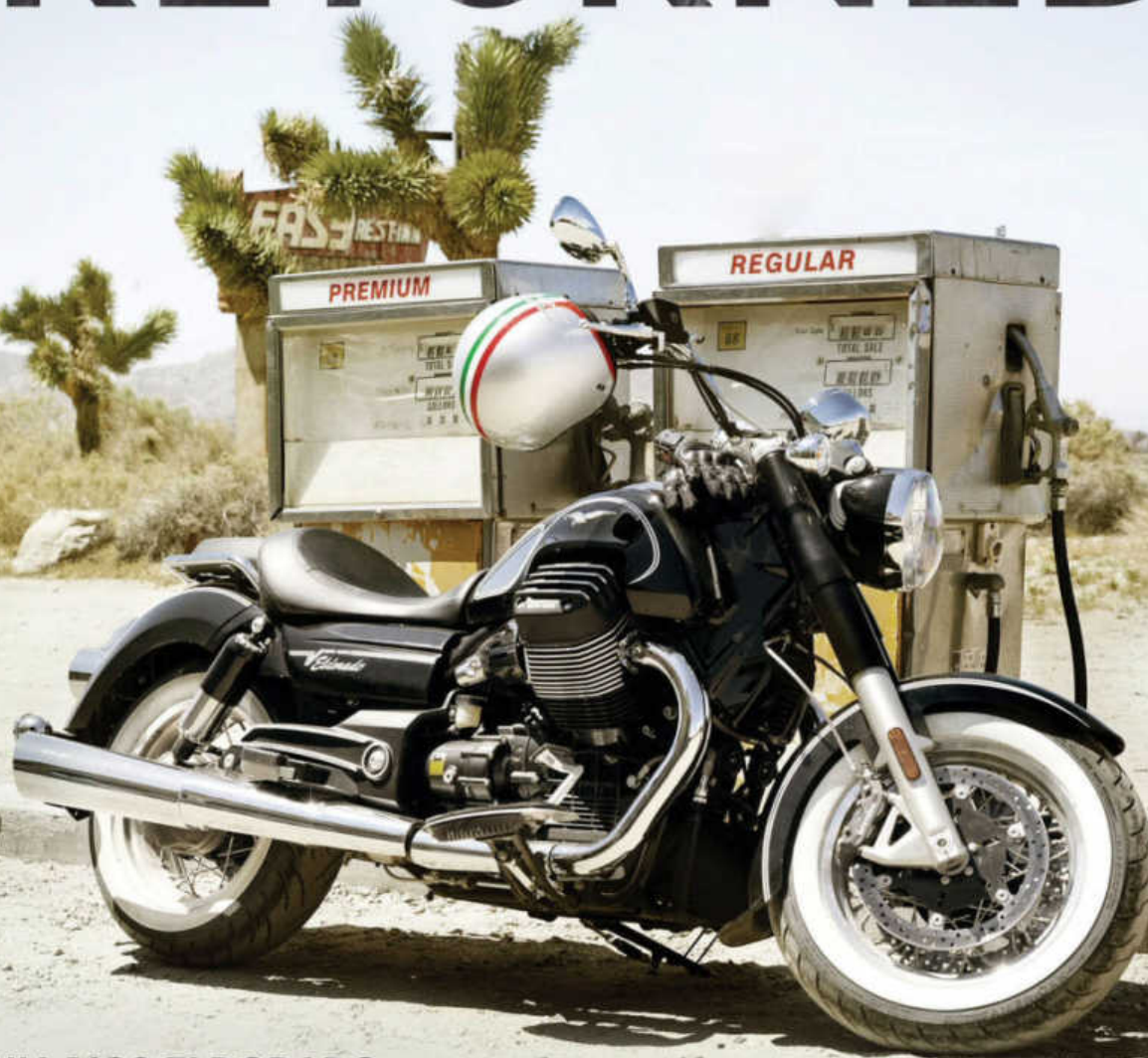
“We also have a lot of support vehicles — up to four in the Himalayas with cooks, camping crews etc. So there is always room in the support vehicle for a passenger if the riding gets too rough.”

Visit: <http://extremebiketours.com/>



■ Read more about touring Cuba on page 80

THE LEGEND HAS RETURNED



CALIFORNIA 1400 ELDORADO
\$24K* RIDE AWAY

The new California Eldorado has been meticulously recreated to reflect the originality of its ancestor by adapting it from the past into the future whilst maintaining its heritage. At its heart beats the 1400cc 90° Transverse V-Twin engine. The new California 1400 Eldorado, in homage of its forefather embraces bullhorn handlebars, spoked wheels, full cover shock absorbers, daytime running lights, luxurious saddle, passenger grab rails and gem-shaped taillight which all combine to make the Eldorado stand out on the open road. Standard features also include Ride By Wire with three-way switchable mapping, cruise control, ABS and Traction Control. The Eldorado has performance, handling, comfort, technology and style. The Eldorado is waiting to be ridden where ever your journey may take you.

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*Recommended Ride Away Price. Price is subject to change without notice. Overseas models shown for illustration purposes. Consult your Moto Guzzi dealer for more details. Moto Guzzi Australia promote safe and responsible riding.

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AIR FREE

Airless tyres coming to motorcycles

Airless tyres are already used in many applications, from bicycles to trucks, but they have yet to come to production motorcycles and cars. However, it may not be long before they are. No more worrying about getting the tyre pressures right or being stranded with a puncture!

Airless tyres are not a new concept — they have been widely used in industrial and military vehicles, and in 1932 English dirt-track rider Les Blackborough used a back wheel with wooden balls mounted on the rim to “broadside rapidly on hard surfaces”.

Polaris has also released its WV850 ATV with non-pneumatic tyres with a honeycomb interior. The puncture-proof tyres have even been tested by the US army, which fired live rounds into them. However, non-pneumatic tyres are heavy, expensive and limited to slow-moving vehicles. Now, several tyre manufacturers are working on fixing those problems and developing cheaper manufacturing processes.

Michelin has been working on its Tweel (combined tyre and wheel, geddit?) for several years, Bridgestone has developed non-pneumatic

concept car and scooter tyres that are almost production ready, and the latest is South Korean tyre manufacturer Hankook that seems to have cracked the high-speed problem.

The iFlex is Hankook's fifth attempt at non-pneumatic tyres and has been tested on an electric car at up to 130km/h. It is also cheaper to produce and easy to recycle, with motorcycle versions bound to follow.



HIPSTERS GO ELECTRIC

Stylish Bolt electric moped for the road

This Bolt M-1 hipster electric moped could be the template for a similar-styled electric motorcycle. Bolt Motorbikes founder and chief scientist Nate Jauvtus says he started commuting on a moped when he moved to San Francisco and designed the M-1 with fellow moped commuter and engineer Zach Levenberg.

“We definitely have our eyes on the motorcycle market,” he says. “We don’t have much of an attraction to scooters as we know them, but we have some cool ideas in the pipeline. I have a motorcycle licence and I’ve been riding since October 13, 1990, starting on the dirt and then graduating to street in 1996. I’ve got motorbikes in my blood.” He says they have already had interest from Australia. “It is on our roadmap, but our focus these days is making sure we nail the US market before expanding.”

The Bolt M-1 costs about \$US5500 and includes some elements of moped and motorcycle in a very trendy package that wouldn’t look out of place in an urban custom motorcycle garage.

It’s not an electric replacement for an ICE motorcycle and it isn’t a gawky moped, but a craft combination of the two with a 5500-Watts motor capable of up to 40mph (64km/h) in full electric power or simply ridden as an electric moped in “economy” mode with power restricted to 1000W and a top speed of 20mph (32km/h).

The moped can be ridden in California without a licence if you stick to “economy” mode, which gives a range of up to 50 miles (82km). Of course, you can pedal and extend your range, and it also features regenerative braking which helps charge the battery.

It also looks like a cross between a mountain bike and trials bike and some of the photos show it on the dirt, which would be a great and fun application.

The M-1 has a computer control system with passcode protection, USB phone charger and Bluetooth-connected mobile application.

The quick-release 1.7kWh lithium iron phosphate battery pack fast-charges to 90 per cent in 1.5 hours. Bolt recommends using the 110V home charger for five-hour “maintenance” charging to increase battery longevity. It would charge even quicker on 240V.

BOLT M-1 ELECTRIC MOPED

Battery	33 Volt/300 Amp/1.68kWhr LiFePO4
Power	1000W (economy)/5500W (sport)
Charge	5hr / 1.5hr (fast charge)
Weight	63.5kg
Wheelbase	1143mm
Wheel size	432mm
Seat height	686mm
http://www.boltmotorbikes.com/	



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SIDE VIEW ASSIST: BMW'S BLIND-SPOT TECHNOLOGY



"It is only designed to assist the rider: it is not a substitute for looking"

BMW is introducing the world's first blind-spot monitoring system for motorcycles as part of the upgrade of its C650 maxi-scooters.

Side View Assist (SVA) gives the rider a visual warning if there other vehicles in the rider's blind spot, showing warning lights at the bases of the mirrors.

SVA uses four sensors around the bike that detect other vehicles within 5m of the bike, but it only gives the rider a warning if there's at least 10km/h difference in speed of the vehicles. Its operating range is between 25 and 80km/h.

BMW's intention is to prevent riders from moving into the path of other road users after failing to check their blind spots, and the company makes the point that it is "only designed to assist the rider: it is not a substitute

for looking in the rear mirror or looking over one's shoulder and under no circumstances releases the rider from their responsibility and obligations".

All the same, in traffic SVA is likely to be a lifesaver, whether protecting someone from their own inattention or from an error of judgment.

However, at this stage the optional SVA technology is only homologated for the C650GT in European markets, and there's no word yet on when it might come to Australia.

SVA is one of a host of new featured on the 2016 C-series maxi-scooters, which will come in GT and Sport guises with sharper styling that hints strongly at BMW's S-series sports bikes. Both models will now have traction control as a standard feature alongside anti-lock brakes.

Their drivetrains have been significantly revised, with a clutch that engages more quickly for a faster take-off.

Taller overall CVT ratios help the scooters accelerate from the line more quickly too, as well as stretching top speed by a fraction to 180km/h ... though it's probably more relevant that the highway cruising revs have been dropped a little.

BMW says a new exhaust system has given the 649cc, 44kW twin-cylinder maxis a "particularly full and sonorous sound".

New suspension spring rates and damping setting promise better ride quality without reducing the previous models' dynamic abilities, BMW claims.

Other changes include colours, ease of use of the centre stand, instrument design and calling the Sport model a 650 instead of a 600.

SCANNED CREDENTIALS

Draggin Jeans proves DuPont Kevlar content

Draggin Jeans is taking a technological step to prove its jeans are made of real Kevlar. Now you can scan the Izon Security label on the company's Draggin Classics with an I-nigma App on your smartphone, which will direct you to a link which certifies the product for the registered trademarks of Dupont and Kevlar.

American chemical company DuPont invented the strong and lightweight synthetic fibre in 1965 and now many motorcycle products claim to contain Kevlar. However, DuPont

has brought in the lawyers and hundreds of products have been removed from the market for falsely claiming they include DuPont Kevlar.

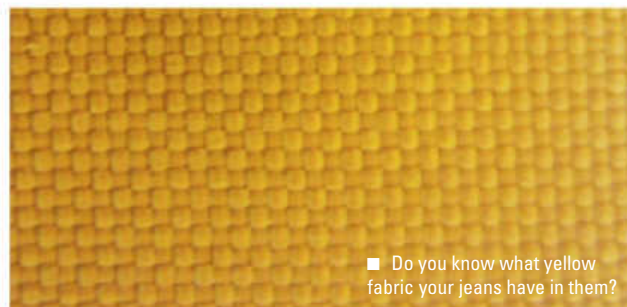
Melbourne-based Draggin Jeans was the first licensee to be approved to use the DuPont Kevlar Preferred Licensee logo. Sales manager Wil Cope says it means customers can be assured Draggin products contain Kevlar.

In a press statement, Draggin refers to "copycat goods. A lot of companies claim to be using Kevlar in their products. At Draggin we have seen it all, with copycats stooping as low as

to claim that yellow-dyed cotton is in fact Kevlar and made to look like Kevlar," it says.

"At Draggin, when it comes to your personal safety on a motorcycle, we want you to feel confident and assured in our clothes you are wearing. We want to ensure our Draggin riders feel secure when they buy a Draggin garment that they are getting the genuine Kevlar, not the cheap copycat."

Draggin has been making rash-resistant jeans since the '90s and proved their durability with a tester being dragged behind a motorcycle.





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COPYCAT GOLDWING

“Motorcycles have also not been immune to the Chinese copycats and this is not the first time Honda has been copied by the Chinese”

The Chinese seem immune to international trade laws that bind other countries and their latest blatant rip-off is an electric Honda Goldwing. We all know the Chinese make cheap copies of well-known brands and many of us probably have a plastic Gucci belt made in a sweatshop in China. However, the Chinese have also made many copies of bigger and more expensive products such as cars. Some of the cars copied include the Range Rover Evoque, Smart ForTwo, Hummer, Porsche Cayman, Audi A6, Jeep Cherokee, BMW X1, Rolls-Royce Phantom and MINI Cooper.

Some car manufacturers tried to stop the Chinese copying their cars, but failed in an obstructive and partisan legal system, so they

formed alliances with Chinese companies to make their products for the local market.

Motorcycles have also not been immune and this is not the first time Honda has been copied by the Chinese. CFMoto's 650TK is a whole lot like the ST1300 and there was even a Chinese brand called “Hongda” that made Honda lookalikes.

Several manufacturers, including Honda and Yamaha, have tried to fight Chinese manufacturers in the courts over breach of copyright, but it is a long process as there are hundreds of copycat manufacturers. So, like the car makers, Honda has formed an allegiance with one of the knockoff Chinese companies to make their bikes for the local market.

Now electric vehicle company Jiangsu Xinri

has filed this blatant rip-off design for a patent. Even though it looks exactly like a Goldwing with an internal combustion engine, that engine houses an electric motor and battery.

Jiangsu Xinri was established in 1999 to produce electric scooters, bikes and cars. It exports to Europe, North America, Africa and throughout Asia.

■ Imitation is the greatest form of flattery, right?!



UPDATED PAINTWORKS

“Scott has accepted responsibility and said they ‘outsmarted’ themselves with the \$11m penny pinching exercise”

Indian and Victory motorcycles are updating their painting processes after learning a costly lesson in how fastidious riders are about their motorcycle's paint.

Polaris had updated the motorcycle paint facility in Spirit Lake, Iowa, but cut about \$11m in costs and found the quality of paint was not good enough for its discerning customers. Now they are having to rely on old painting equipment as well as outsourcing to get the high-quality paint that riders demand.

Polaris CEO Scott Wine says they hired a Minneapolis consulting company which recommended they spend \$41m on a new painting system for their motorcycle plant. However, he admitted to *The Wall Street Journal* that his managers decided to cut costs to \$30m by leaving out some of the recommendations such as an infra-red dryer and a three-month period to sort out problems. Instead, the company went ahead immediately with the limited paintworks upgrade and ended up having to fix problems such as dust particles in the paint from air dryers.

Supplies of the highly popular Indian Scout were also held up because the model was withdrawn to sort out problems with paint around the fuel filler. They also couldn't meet demand for the new two-tone Indian Chief because the new paint facility couldn't cope with the lengthy process. Scott has accepted responsibility and said they “outsmarted” themselves with the \$11m penny-pinching exercise. He says fixing the

paint system will now cost them \$20m this year.

As the maker of off-road vehicles, Polaris admits it underestimated the finicky demands of motorcycle riders. While ATV drivers don't care about the paintwork of a vehicle that will be scratched and dirtied all its working life, riders are far more discerning about the quality of paint and chrome on their machines.

■ Paint quality is set to improve



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SPEED FEST!

New world wheelie champ reaches 197mph

A new world wheelie champion was crowned, a woman topped the speed trials and a motorised garden shed and world's fastest toilet took honours at the Motorcycle Wheelie World Championship in August.

The new wheel champ is Gary Rothwell of Liverpool, who carried the front wheel of his turbo Hayabusa aloft for a kilometre at just over 197.879mph (318.455km/h).

He beat 30 of the world's top wheelie riders from Finland, France, Holland, Ireland, Sweden, the UK and the US at the Motorcycle Wheelie World Championship on August 16 at Elvington Airfield, North Yorkshire.

Second was former champion Egbert Van Popta from Holland riding a Hayabusa Turbo to 195.805mph (315.117km/h), and third was Paddy O'Sullivan from Ireland riding a Suzuki GSX-R1000 at 189.822mph (305.488km/h).

There were also nearly 30 of the world's top speed riders taking part in the top speed

section. The quickest was the UK's fastest woman, Beccie Ellis, from Scunthorpe, who rode her Hayabusa Turbo to 259.542mph (417.692km/h). After crossing the timing beam, she was caught by a gust of wind and blown off track, crashing and breaking her ankle, bruising some ribs and suffering whiplash.

Second was Jack Frost from Northern Ireland riding a Hayabusa Turbo 254.457mph (409.508km/h) and third was Les Marsh, Europe's fastest grandad biker from Cleveland riding a Hayabusa Turbo 245.622mph (395.290km/h).

But most eyes were on the range of strange vehicles put through their paces. They included a jet-powered shopping cart, a motorised garden shed, the world's

fastest toilet and one of the most powerful motorbikes in the world at 8000cc.

Top speed for an unusual vehicle was a motorised garden shed designed, built and driven by Kevin Nicks from Oxfordshire, who did a top speed of 70.767mph (113.888km/h).

Second was a jet-powered shopping trolley made by Matt McKeown from Plymouth with 55.8575mph (89.893km/h), and third was the Millyard Viper V10 driven by Allen Millyard from Berkshire, who took five years and £30,000 to design and build the bike. It reached a top speed of 182.511mph (293.722km/h).

There is no official top speed registered for the world's fastest toilet, but Shaun Walker took it for a run anyway.



■ A flying garden shed



■ Beccie Ellis world top speed winner



■ Matt McKeown and his jet powered shopping trolley



■ Allen Millyard and the 8000cc Millard Viper



■ The world's fastest toilet

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TWO INTO FOUR

Honda MotoGP-powered track car!

Honda is powering a project track day car with its MotoGP-derived four-cylinder engine from the exclusive RC213V-S sportsbike. It's called the Honda Project 2&4 and it was unveiled at the Frankfurt Motor Show in September. In road legal form, the RC213V-S engine has 118kW of power and 102Nm of torque, which is much less than the CBR1000RR at 127kEW/106Nm, but the sports kit that powers the concept car ramps up to a phenomenal 158kW/118Nm.

Like KTM's tram-day X-Bow, it is an open-cockpit car to give the driver an open-air motorcycle feel. The project is the result of a company-wide creative competition between all of the automaker's global design studios. It was developed with Honda's motorcycle design centre in Asaka and its automobile design centre in Wako, Japan.

Whether it will remain a concept only or go into production is anyone's guess. There isn't a lot of call for track-day cars like there is for track-day bikes.



BDR STATESIDE

"Their mission in America was to engage US military veterans and first responders (firefighters, police, paramedics) in conversations around suicide prevention"

Sixty-five Australians rode in the first international Black Dog Ride in the USA in September. They rode Harley-Davidson Touring motorcycles 7000km from New York to LA, visiting 18 cities in 21 days to kick-start conversations about suicide prevention.

Black Dog Ride founder and BMW rider Steve Andrews says their mission in America was to engage US military veterans and first responders (firefighters, police, paramedics) in conversations around suicide prevention. Due to the nature of their work, US military veterans and first responders are at high risk of developing depression, anxiety and PTSD, and they subsequently have a tragically high rate of suicide, says Steve.

Black Dog Ride across America partnered with Mental Health First Aid USA to raise awareness and funds for Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training scholarships for military veterans and first responders.

Meanwhile, the annual Australian Black Dog Ride of about 350 riders and 50 pillions raised more than \$300,000 to bring the seven-year total to more than \$2 million. Funds raised go to Lifeline and Mental Health First Aid.



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MORE PLEASE!

Norton to expand to eight models

Norton Motorcycles plans to increase its current single-engine and four-model line-up to three engine platforms and seven or eight models. It will also break with tradition and produce bikes with a 1200cc V4 engine and smaller parallel twins, says design head Simon Skinner.

The announcement comes after a £7.5 (\$A16) million investment at the company's Leicestershire headquarters last month, creating 600 new jobs. The investment includes a £4 (\$A8) million government grant.

Norton Motorcycles announced it would use the grants to increase its current single-engine and four-model line-up to three-engine platforms and seven or eight models. The company says it plans to produce a 200bhp (150kW), 1200cc V4-powered sportsbike and a new 650 parallel twin. Currently, all Nortons are powered by a 58kW/90Nm 961cc parallel twin.

"It has been something we've wanted to do as a brand since 2009," says Simon. "When I first started with Norton we had very early discussions talking about V4 and the type of

bikes we wanted to do. But we had to get the business right first, get the Commando right first, the suppliers, the dealers and all the boring stuff right."

The unnamed bike will be inspired by TT race bikes, feature an all-new V4 engine developed by Ricardo Motorcycles and use design influences from some of the greatest names in British engineering including Aston Martin, and the British F1 car industry.

Norton released some sketches of the new V4 bike and says it will be a high-end bike costing up to £30,000 (\$A64,770) and would rival the Ducati 1299 Panigale. It will have carbon-fibre fairings and wheels, an aerospace aluminium frame, and billet parts welded and polished by hand at Norton. It is also expected to have a lot of hi-tech rider aids such as ABS, traction control and engine maps. There are no more details on the 650cc, but it could be a cheaper version of the current Commando range.

The company's current line-up is the Commando 961 Sport (\$31,490 plus on-road costs), Cafe Racer (\$35,490) and SF (\$37,490), and limited-

edition Dominator SS (about \$38,000).

Norton owner and chief executive Stuart Garner says the grant will be part of a broader investment of £20 (\$42.5) million being pumped back into the business. He said it would help them expand production to 6000 bikes within the next five years, mainly for overseas markets.

The grant, awarded from the Advanced Manufacturing Supply Chain Initiative (AMSCI), will allow Norton to establish a new British Motorcycle Manufacturing Academy (BMMA) for the next generation of engineers.

It will also support the creation of a 10,000-sq-ft manufacturing facility and the development of clean motorcycle engine technology which could power eco-friendly vehicles within two years.

"We need to invest in the future and this money will pay for skills and training," he says. "We are putting in £4 million, but over four or five years there will be £20 million going into the business, giving us four new models."

Work will start on the new building in the next few weeks and it should be finished by Christmas.

■ More of this is a good thing!



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PROTECT THE INNOCENT

“There is a lesson in the British case for Australians that the road must be left in a suitable condition for all other road users, including motorcyclists”

A young British woman who fell from her motorcycle after a farmer left mud on the road has been awarded £10,000 (\$21,460) compensation. Maurice Blackburn Lawyers principal Malcolm Cummings of Melbourne says there is a lesson in the British case for Australians that the road must be left in a suitable condition for all other road users, including motorcyclists.

In the UK incident, then 16-year-old Carrie Dickinson crashed her bike on the mud near Doncaster in 2013. She was knocked unconscious, broke her collarbone, suffered severe concussion, cuts and bruises.

Her lawyer alleged the farmer caused or permitted the country road to become or remain

in a dangerous, defective condition, and a trap to anyone in that area, failed to fence, guard or warn the rider of the hazard, and failed to remove the mud, causing injury, loss and damage.

Malcolm says he cannot name any similar cases in Australia. “But it may well have happened and the principles are exactly the same as defective roadworks,” he says.

Farmers, truck drivers, authorities and roadworks contractors who have an impact on the road surface have an obligation to leave the road in a safe condition for all road users.

“If mud or any similar sort of material is left on the road, it’s clearly foreseeable that that would be inherently dangerous for motorbikes in particular,” Malcolm points out. He has defended

the case of a rider who crashed because of poor maintenance and is investigating another matter where slippery clay left on the road after roadworks caused a rider to crash. “Obviously what may be safe for some road users may not be safe for motorcyclists,” he says.

While road users should take care to leave the road surface in a safe state, riders also need to exercise care around farms. On quiet country back roads, farmers are prone to leave mud, gravel, grain and livestock manure on the road. Cow manure, in particular, can be very slippery and riders always slow down on a notorious stretch of Mt Mee in Brisbane’s hinterland where dairy cattle cross the road and leave a slippery trail.

DRIVERS NEED REFRESHER ON LANE FILTERING

“For motorists it is about awareness that it is allowed, and for motorcyclists it is about knowing what the law requires in terms of safe and compliant riding when filtering”

New lane filtering laws and other updated road rules mean motorists should take refresher tests when they renew their licence and it seems motorists are in favour, according to an RACQ survey.

Fifty-three per cent of people surveyed believed re-sitting a theory test would be beneficial, and the majority of those in favour said it should be based on time behind the wheel, rather than age.

RACQ spokesman and Suzuki Bandit rider Steve Spalding says the recent introduction of lane filtering road rules for Queensland motorcyclists is a good example of a changed rule that isn’t necessarily fully understood.

One rider claims he was recently berated by an unpleasant taxi driver who wound down his window and informed him that what he was doing was illegal (or words to that effect). He replied that lane filtering was now legal (or words to that effect). If professionals like taxi drivers don’t know the latest road rules, what hope is there for other drivers?

Not that re-sitting a road rules test should worry riders. A recent British motor insurance company survey found that riders beat other motorists on road rule knowledge eight times out of 10. Steve says they were surprised and encouraged to see over half of those surveyed supported updating their road rule knowledge at the time of licence renewal.

He says the RACQ regularly receives comments about the need to have higher levels of understanding about updated or newly introduced road rules such as lane filtering.

“For motorists it is about awareness that it is allowed, and for motorcyclists it is about knowing what the law requires in terms of safe and compliant riding when filtering,” he says. “We are not calling for retesting of the practical component of renewing a license, just starting a discussion about options to help road users keep their road rule knowledge up to date and to improve road safety outcomes for everyone on the road, particularly vulnerable ones.”

The RACQ will submit its research to the state



■ Edward’s ideas about how to lane split prove many riders could do with a refresher course...

government’s Road Safety Action Plan. “It’s important to continually re-evaluate the way we approach licensing to ensure the safest possible outcome for all road users,” he says.



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THE THINGS YOU SEE

BIGSHOT

"It was the best day of riding so far with clear skies, lush rolling hills and a (mostly) good road. Even the quarry trucks didn't cause too much grief as we climbed the Great Dividing Range."

Here's a 21-day, 3000km scenic tour from Queensland to Victoria with plenty of time for riding, rest and rain on page 94.

Photo: Anne-Mia Kierren/Red George Media







■ There's no ambo to come save you out here

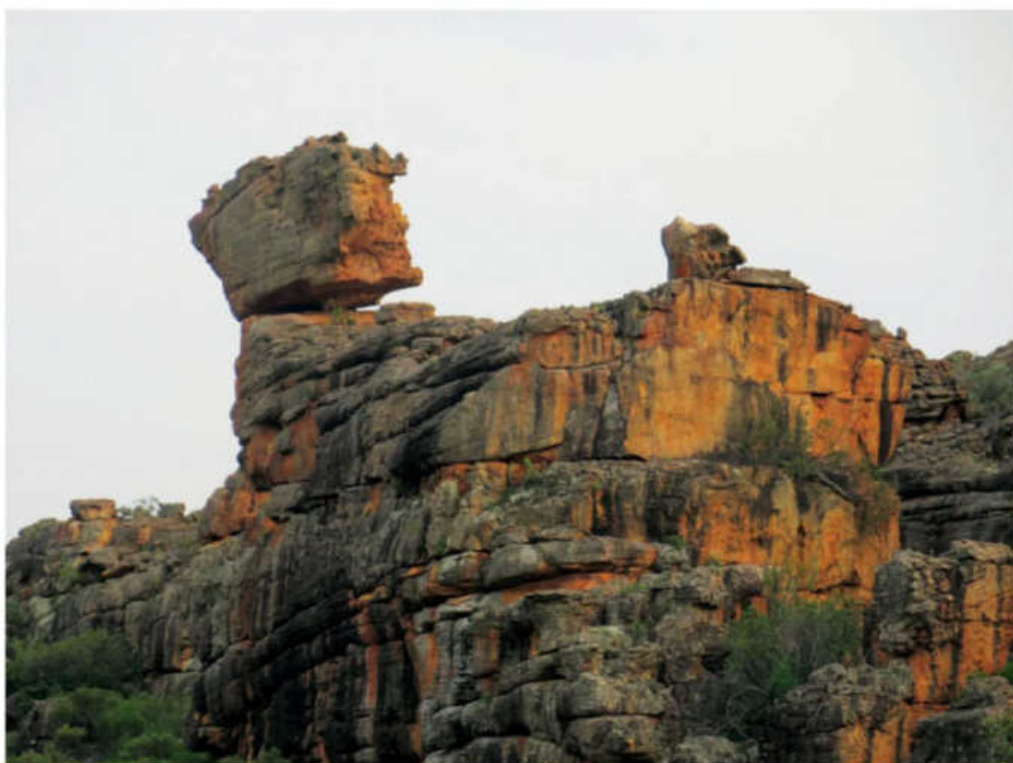
ORGANISED CHAOS



Get ready for the chaos — your adventure awaits ...

Having had numerous bike adventures across the world, I've experienced a fair number of difficult situations — from crashes and medical emergencies to torrential floods and ferocious bushfires. We need to understand from the beginning that preparation and attitude is part of the solution. Research, planning, understanding and even visualising the potential problems help keep you ahead of the game.

We in the west do live a particularly sheltered life. Let's face it — we have a lot of rules. Apart from the odd idiot here and there, the rest of us ride and drive reasonably safely, we stop at red lights, our road surfaces are pretty good, even non-slip, for goodness sake. But when you arrive in Marrakech or



▲ There are sand people hiding in the hills ... or are there?

Johannesburg, you'll find things can be a little loose in the Health & Safety and traffic law department. Traffic lights and rules of the road appear to be more "advisory", to put it mildly. Add to this that you may be driving on the "wrong" side of the road and when the truck in front of you indicates right — he

may be turning right or he may be telling you that it's safe to overtake — what? In summary, it can be a little calamitous.

The good news is that we bikers already know how to ride defensively, and much of the mayhem I'm referring to can be less of a challenge if you're informed, prepared, have



↑ Charley was ere



↑ Fight or flight? Self preservation is key

done your research, and are armed with an essential ingredient: the right attitude.

Let's take Johannesburg as a starter. You fly in for a trip of a lifetime and pick up your nice hire bike near the airport. It's dark — that's your first mistake. Riding or even



↑ Beware the stripy horses

driving around Jo'burg at night for a novice is ill advised. But knowing this, you can make sure you get a flight that gets you in early so at least you've got daylight on your side.

Personally, I enjoy the madness of some countries. It allows your inner craziness to get out into the fresh air. I think it's captured by the word "freedom". The freedom to take risks and make decisions without some authority making you safe. I'm writing this piece while sitting in the sun on the banks of the Okavango River in northern Namibia. Just a few feet away there are hippos and crocodiles — no fences and nobody to save me. Freedom.

Even the basics will help you. Properly prepared, your packing and clothing will help ease you into your new adventure. Ewan and I famously over-packed for *Long Way Round*, and you really don't want to start off your new adventure with brand-new enduro boots, a scratched old visor and the latest fashion adventure suit, all in black, just right for a 42°C ride through the Namib Desert. Get rid of these mundane irritants — you've got enough to deal with.

So here are a few tips below. Get these right and then some of the pressure can be released, allowing you to focus on the job at hand.

- Research the country in detail. Watch the YouTube clips. Buy the DVDs and read the

book. Someone has already done it so learn from him or her.

- Ride defensively — always expect the unexpected and remember you can break the rules a little too, if need be. Don't have an accident because you're trying to stay within the law.
- Travel light. It's very hard to do and it's a common mistake to over-pack. Your bike, big or small, will be far easier to handle with minimal luggage. How easy is it to get on and off your bike with the top box, tank bag, panniers, backpack and enduro boots? Now do it in sand or a busy track in Mozambique or in that hectic, confusing junction in central Marrakech.
- Don't rely on other people to save you. If you're in a bushfire, make some informed decisions. Which way is the wind blowing? Is there a firebreak? Will your hotel burn down? Should you pack your bike ready to do the great escape? (Er, probably yes!) Back home people will advise you what to do — but in some exciting countries you're better off making your own plan.
- We all love maps, but having a GPS on board is a real help. You can have great fun plotting the routes on the paper map and then use the GPS to take some of the pressure off, particularly in cities. I take my Garmin Zumo everywhere, and my Tracks4Africa maps are full of information and made of a wax-like paper so they last forever.

- Insurance that a) includes repatriation of you and your bike, b) covers you riding a big bike, over 125cc. Many companies will only cover you up to 125cc. Finding this out when you're alone in a hot hospital in Katima Mulilo is a bit late.

I could actually write a book about this stuff — maybe I will. It's a wide area to cover but the anecdotes would make good reading. Just this year alone we've been in a raging flood, were snowed in and trapped for two days in North Africa with 28 riders, and then only this week a wild bushfire burnt down the lodge next to our wilderness camp in the Caprivi Strip at the top of Namibia. On all occasions it was our knowledge and experience, our choices and our decisions that pulled us through to safety. There was nobody to ring, no help was coming and we all had an incredible adventure — and got home safe.

Adventure riding is the best way to see the world. We just need to have some knowledge and independence to help us enjoy it. **ARR**

RIDE WITH CHARLEY

To find out more about Charley, his events, his adventure rides and all things *Long Way Round*, go to www.charleyboorman.com



GEOFF SEDDON

RIDING SHOTGUN

CRUSTY OLD NORTON RIDER LURES THE PILLION IN A MILLION

It's no secret I bought my Commando to, if not relive my youth, at least remind me of earlier motorcycling times. It's doing its job very well. 75mph feels fast again and if the planets line up, we might one day have a crack at the ton. I spend a lot of time working on the blessed thing but am never sure what surprises are in store when I ride it. I gain great satisfaction when it is running well and enjoy the challenge when it isn't.

Best of all, it has enticed my better half to ride shotgun again, after a lengthy spell rejecting my best advances. Not that I blame her. The pillion seat and pegs of a 900SS Ducati are ill-matched to a lady of her stature, and of course there were all those children.

We got married early, as did many couples in the 1970s. Never had no money either, but we did have a Suzuki GT750 and then a Norton 850 Interstate, and I reckon I did nearly as many miles two-up as I did solo on both. I'd only owned dirt bikes before that, so the bride and I learned to ride on the road together and we got pretty good at it. We only crashed the once, a head-on with a Great Dane; except for the 850, no one was hurt, not even the dog. Apart from that, we covered a lot of tarmac and all our early motorcycling memories are good ones.

The kids started arriving in the early 1980s and we turned out to be pretty good at that too, so opportunities for pillion riding became few and far between. We did however make the most of them, including a memorable

week-long trip to Phillip Island. We outsourced the brood to the poor old in-laws, who spent the whole time dreading the four o'clock knock from the wallopers. I'd already had my last crash by then but they weren't to know that.

It was on that trip that Stephanie explained what she liked so much about pillioning. It was something we did together but also allowed a busy young mum some quality time with her own thoughts. Any communication was by touch and sign language, and we always had plenty to talk about when we stopped.

The only time she ever punched me was doing a sports bike feature for *RALPH* magazine in the late 1990s. I've never been a fast rider but I used to fool a lot of people by learning a couple of roads well, one of which was the treacherous Wollombi Road north of Sydney. *RALPH* had managed to scoop all the bike mags with a first ride of the new Yamaha R1, which we pitted against a CBR900RR and a

ZX-9R. Stephanie and I were on the Kawasaki as the pack lined up a long straight followed by a big sweeper that I knew looked a lot tighter and gnarlier than it actually was. I figured I could fool a few more people if I overtook the two other guys riding solo and sailed through the corner two-up without losing too much speed. It did the trick, I'm pleased to say, they were very impressed. Meanwhile the missus, ever the skilled pillion, waited until the next straight before she got one into my kidneys.

Which brings me back to the Norton. One of the reasons for buying it was to have a more pillion-friendly mount. Unlike that ZX-9R and my SS, it has a proper pillion seat and low-mounted foot pegs. Equally important, it is a vintage motorcycle, with not a lot of power and even less in the way of brakes, and is happiest putting along at the speed limit. It looks, sounds and smells just like the one we rode all those years ago, as newlyweds. She said as much one day and I started to like my chances. You and me, babe, how about it?

I'm happy to report we haven't lost our touch, nor the feeling of intimacy that comes from riding two-up with the one you love. I've only ever pillioned a mate when I've had too, usually because his bike has broken down and thankfully mostly on bikes with grab rails. It's a totally different experience riding with my wife, as much an extension of our marriage as anything else. It offers that same special blend of trust and fun, shared life experience and physical contact, especially when she puts her arms around my waist and leans forward into the corners. She's keen to do it again so I know it was good for her too. You meet the nicest chicks on a Norton. **ARR**

"Any communication is by touch and sign language, and we always have plenty to talk about when we stop"



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ZOE NAYLOR

TRACK TIME

ZOE HEADS TO THE TRACK TO BOLSTER HER SKILLS

Woot woot! I was literally jumping out of my skin with excitement when the opportunity presented itself to return to the California Superbike School track day at Eastern Creek to complete my Level 2 (of 4) certificate. I couldn't believe it had been nearly a year since my last visit!

It's so refreshing to re-visit a business where the passion it exudes hasn't wavered one iota since the first time you knocked on its door. Steve and the team were still as enthusiastic, dedicated and focused as ever. Their spirit contributes to making it one of the best adult day adventures I believe you can participate in as a motorcyclist, no matter what level you're at.

Whether you BYO bike or rent one of their BMW S1000RRs (still on my dream list), the day is a non-stop learning extravaganza without any drudgery. Between classroom and track sessions, complete with personalised one-on-one coaching, the improvement in my understanding, skill and handling of a motorcycle improved tenfold throughout the day.

It was lovely to return and not feel that sweaty palm fear surging through my veins before setting out on the track for the first time. Level 2 had a whole new lot of drills but I was surprised how much of the Level 1 training came flooding back as soon as we set out on the track for our first session.

This time around, I felt I really solidified finding good entry, apex and exit points on each of the 12 track corners and understood how I can now apply that knowledge to improving my



■ The race track is a great place to hone your riding skills. It's a lot safer than on the road!

"It's one of the best adult day adventures I believe you can participate in as a motorcyclist, no matter what level you're at"

riding out on the open roads. After the drill called "Changing Lines", I felt like my confidence grew yet another notch by breaking through my own limiting fears if I found myself on a line I hadn't anticipated.

We learnt how to broaden our vision to take in a "wider view" while riding, which several members of the Level 2 group had specifically come back to practise again, even after completing Level 4. Improving our ability to take in a wider view while riding is the solution to our propensity to have target fixation, which many consider the worst enemy of a motorcycle rider.

The final drill of the day was called the "Pick Up", where we began a very preliminary look at how to stand a bike up out

of a turn. This is like an entry-level segue into Level 3, which I cannot wait to try. From my limited understanding it's where you practise using your whole body to ride the motorcycle and get the most out of your turns ... a la Casey Stoner, bum off seat and one knee dragging around the corner. Yes, there is room to dream!

Now that I have completed Level 1 and 2, it feels almost mandatory to go and train on an open track day to put everything into practice. I was by far the slowest rider on the day. I couldn't crack 140 down the straight and would have a mini scream inside my helmet as other riders fanged passed me at 240km/h or more. I would like to build up my confidence so I can go a little faster and also

be a little more ambitious in my approach speed for taking corners. I appreciate this can only come with practice.

The beautiful thing about this school is that it doesn't just cater to the speed demons. In fact, Steve reassured me at the end of the day that it's better to solidify the drills and practise the techniques properly before aiming to go faster.

As an adult you can't beat the joyful playfulness that comes from learning something you're truly passionate about. It really is just the most brilliant feeling ever! I was given the most amazing race suit from Ixon and I'd also like to specially thank Tim Munro for the incredible pics. You guys made me feel like a total pro!

Till next time, safe travels. **ARR**

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GREGOR REYNOLDS

STARTING OUT

HOW TO GET NEW DRIVERS ON THE ROAD WITH EXPERIENCE

recently talked to a young bloke who just got his learner's permit to drive a car. He is a city boy and has never even sat behind the wheel of a car in his life, but he passed the computer test and was handed his Ls. His dilemma now is that he lives in a highly populated suburb, so when he pulls out of his driveway for the first time, it will be straight into heavy city traffic.

It's a daunting task to say the least when you have no knowledge of actual car control. The most basic things, like how far to turn the steering wheel to make the car go where you want, or how hard to push the accelerator or brake pedal, are still a mystery to him. Luckily

his parents have an auto, because learning to use a clutch and manual gearbox in that environment would be doubly treacherous!

Now I know he has options, like booking some lessons with a driving instructor in a dual-control car, or getting dad to drive for an hour to somewhere quieter for his first few lessons, but that's not the point. The point is that there must be thousands of teenagers in this situation every year, and I believe they should be better prepared before they are let loose on the roads under mum or dad's tutelage.

Compare this to a young motorcyclist getting their Ls. By then they will already have completed the eight-hour, two-day practical Pre-Learner Course. Here they receive instruction in things like braking, stopping,

starting, accelerating, gear changing, cornering, direction changing etc. They do drills in all these elements and are examined on them at the end of the course. They have to demonstrate that their bike handling skills and control are at an acceptable level before they are allowed to sit for the computer test, and eventually take to the road.

Why is it not the same for learner car drivers? A day or two of practical tuition in a closed environment could make a world of difference to many raw young learners who know the theory, but have never driven a car.

Before there is a hue and cry about the cost or logistics of implementing such a scheme, I may have the perfect solution! The other day I visited a racing driver mate who has a race car simulator. This thing is extremely high tech and it can duplicate the characteristics and feel of any race car, from a Formula 1 to an Aussie V8. It is incredibly realistic, except for the

lack of G forces, and you can dial in to virtually any racetrack in the world and nominate the weather conditions.

It occurred to me that a more basic version would be a great tool in early driver training. Something that could duplicate the feel of a variety of different "learner" road cars would be perfect. They could be both old and new, manual and auto. It would also have a selection of road surfaces, and weather and traffic conditions to choose from. In this way a young person could get the feel of the car's controls before working their way through the different simulated roads and traffic conditions. I reckon it would be a great skill and confidence builder before venturing onto the public roads.

Ideally I think the simulator should be introduced at school level as part of a road safety campaign. If every high school had a quality driving simulator, you could introduce every student to driving in a low stress, no impact environment. Towards the end of Year 9 and beginning of Year 10 would be ideal, so it's just before they all turn 16. At that age anything we can do to educate them on the practicalities of driving has to be a positive. As an incentive perhaps they could do a set course on the simulator and if they pass, it could reduce the learner hours they have to do.

A simulator with all the functions you would need could be built for around 10 grand, and probably a lot less if you were putting one in every high school. In my view that is infinitely affordable for an educative tool with life-saving potential. I reckon that the standard of car drivers has been dropping noticeably over the years, so anything we can do to arrest that, and improve the standard, preparedness, and awareness of our young drivers, has to be a step in the right direction. **ARR**

If every high school had a quality driving simulator, you could introduce every student to driving in a low stress, no impact environment"





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A black motorcycle is shown from the rear, positioned on the left side of a paved road. The road has white lane markings and some fallen leaves. The background is a blurred landscape with greenery and a road that curves into the distance. The overall scene suggests a sense of motion and adventure.

ROAD RULER

**As far as sports tourers go,
this one is ahead by a country mile**



STORY GEOFF SEDDON
PHOTOS KEITH MUIR

It's surprising that a twin-cylinder RS BMW has been out of the catalogue for a few years now. From the release of R100RS in 1976, the series wrote the book on long-legged sports tourers. The all-new R1200RS has been worth waiting for, worthy of a new chapter with a refined blend of comfort and performance tailor-made for covering vast distances at whatever speed you like, just as the old ones did.

The new RS features the same 1170cc 92kW liquid-cooled boxer engine fitted to the R, RT and GS models. Almost 125hp in the old money, this is a seriously powerful bike but can also be as gentle as a lamb at lower revs

“It’s too big and heavy to ride like a sports bike, but is very capable in maintaining a good pace over a good distance, especially with that super-torquey engine. As the old fellas say, it’s not how fast you go, it’s how long you go fast”

and throttle openings. Being a twin, it is always soulful, no matter how you get your motorcycling kicks.

It also shares the chassis and running gear of the R1200R, to the extent that the only real differences are bodywork and handlebars. The naked feel of the R is gone; instead the relatively small fairing and adjustable screen keeps the worst of the weather at bay, if not exactly cocooning the rider like an RT. I don't

always see the vision that BMW designers have in some of their products, but to my eyes the RS is a good-looking bike with a high standard of finish, yet purposeful and ready for a quick lap of Oz should the muse strike.

Alas, our test was slightly shorter, just one day in company with other journalists. From our base near Sydney airport, we battled the morning peak as we headed south to the Royal National Park, Wollongong's northern



↑ Dash presents essentials for the road large and clear

beaches then up the hill to Bulli for lunch. Second verse was the same as the first, only in the other direction. It was a good mix of everything except high-speed work and included some tricky shaded sections, while the opportunity was also provided to sample both the standard RS and the up-spec RS Exclusive, each fitted with a giddy array of options.

My first task was to familiarise myself with the riding modes and other electronic aids.

Suspension preset options are provided for solo, pillion and gear, and riding modes cover Road and Rain. It doesn't take long to work it all out and I soon found myself changing modes on the fly according to road conditions. Both models also come standard with the Dynamic Package — in Australia anyway — which adds two further modes, Dynamic and User, along with Dynamic Traction Control which factors lean angle into the equation.

Our crew included road racers who

instinctively switched to the Dynamic setting before we'd even left the car park, whereas I was content to punt along in Road for the most part, flicking over to Rain when the surface was damp. The difference is noticeable and immediate; I've always been a bit ginger in the wet, even with ABS and traction control, and I like how the whole bike feels a little softer and gentler. Our test was too brief to get into User mode, which allows the rider to mix and match throttle response and traction control settings within each mode. Although aimed at sportier riders looking to fine-tune their steeds, I generally prefer a slower-action throttle, all other things being equal, which shows all this stuff is not just for the fast guys.

The RS also features Electronic Suspension Adjustment, which continuously adjusts damping pressure in the forks and rear shock according to riding conditions. This includes not only the road surface, but also how hard the bike is being ridden, including under acceleration and braking. It sure beats clicking your way through a manual damping adjustment system, as often as not making things worse if you're not sure of what you're doing. In this respect, ESA (and similar systems on Ducatis and other marques) is one of those things you best appreciate when you ride a bike that doesn't have it. So I for one am happy to leave it to the boffins. The Dynamic mode activates a different map for an overall firmer ride, should that be your thing.

I love the mechanical empathy of big twins in any configuration from any country; fast, slow and in between. The RS makes 92kW at 7750rpm but it's rare you'll go there. Instead ►



↑ Black cases and barrels hide the size of the engine





you'll more likely find yourself revelling in the torque, which while peaking at 125Nm at 6500rpm, is making well over 100Nm at just 3000rpm. Translating that into useable horsepower, the R1200RS makes more at 4500rpm than my 900SS Ducati makes at redline. Matho reported some vibration in his R1200R test in the August issue but it didn't intrude on this particular day. Final-drive gearing is midway between the R1200RT and the R1200GS, and I have no idea of the bike's top speed.

Various dash options can be scrolled through, with a sport mode offering a larger tachometer display, but with grunt aplenty I ended up in tourist mode which added a prominent digital speedo to the permanent analogue gauge on the left. Doubling up, yes, but the torque, suspension and sweet steering make for a deceptively fast bike, and my licence needs all the help it can get. As well as dual trip meters and the other usual suspects, the dash also contains a potentially life-saving tyre pressure warning, which will start blinking the bad news even before you pick it up in the bike's handling.

As Matho detailed in his R 1200 R review, liquid-cooling is not the only change from the older engines. The six-speed gearbox is now contained within the crankcases, driven by a wet clutch you may hardly ever use if you tick the \$600 Gear Shift Assistant Pro box in the options list. In our case, it was fitted to all the test bikes, allowing us to change gears up or down without manually disengaging the clutch. Upshifts can be affected with the throttle open, which is a tonne of fun on the gas, while downshifts require the throttle to be closed, the engine giving itself a little blip to match revs to ratios. It was most useful in the city where you always seem to be changing





WHAT PRICE EXCLUSIVITY?

While putting this story together, I came across a test I did in 1994 of the then-new R 1100 RS. It was the first to have the fuel-injected air-cooled eight-valve engine and Telelever front end. It was priced at \$20,000 (on road) which I described as being "in the ball park". Translated into 2015 dollars, we're talking just shy of \$35,000.

The new BMW R 1200 RS retails for \$22,950, a thousand dollars more than the R 1200 R roadster. Given its broader focus, it looks like pretty good value, especially with heated grips, tyre pressure monitor, cruise control and all the suspension, braking and engine management electronics included. The blinged-up Exclusive model adds different frame and bodywork colours, a stainless-steel centre fuel tank cover, an engine spoiler and gold-coloured brake calipers for just \$300 more.

Like BMW cars, however, the devil is in the detail of specified options and accessories, at least some of which often come standard on other premium models. Factory-fitted options are an alarm, keyless ignition, clutch-less gearshift and touring package (which includes a main stand) for \$2000 all-up. Must-have accessories include panniers at \$1350 the pair, while a top box adds just under \$1000. The BMW navigation system is well-integrated and easy to operate, as you'd expect for \$1150 or \$2880 with GPS capability, by which time you're looking at a \$30,000 motorcycle.



gear. I only really used it in the fun sections when I reminded myself to, but it's possibly one of those things you'd use more often with familiarity.

Keyless ignition is the option box I'd more likely tick; the convenience of not having to extricate keys from pockets is probably worth \$350. Ditto the \$600 Touring Package which includes a nicely-balanced centrestand and luggage fasteners, but not the actual panniers. Taller and shorter seats are available at

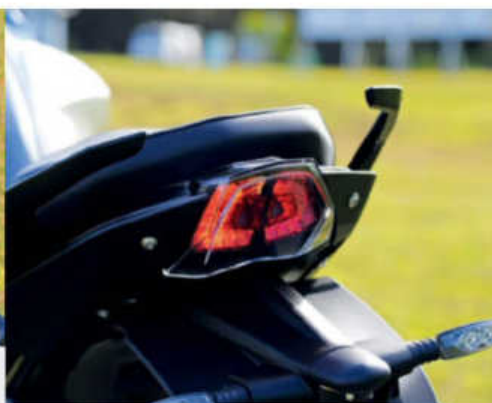
purchase as no cost options.

The R 1200 RS sounds great, not loud but with a distinctive flat-twin note. Gone is the old car-style twin-plate clutch, replaced by a multi-plate unit as innocuous in use as any other. Gears shift with modern precision, with or without the clutch. The bike is well balanced down to walking pace and the standard seat perfect for my 175cm height. Same goes for the gentle reach forward to the forged two-piece aluminium handlebars, narrower and lower

than the R in classic sports-tourer formation. Slightly rear-set but relatively low footpegs are the same on both, and the seat is firm and well-shaped. Unfortunately, I don't think we ever did more than 50km on the test loop before we stopped for photos or some other reason, but the riding position felt natural from the get-go and much longer days on other BMW ►



▲ A better-than-sportsbike pillion seat with big grab rails



▲ Lots on the left switchblock, especially if you option up

BMW R1200RS



saddles suggests it should all be good.

The small RS screen is manually adjustable between two settings, some say on the move, but I struggled to raise it while sitting on the bike. The range of adjustment can also be changed at the mounting points to make it overall higher or lower. I ran it high on the transport sections, then lowered it when I was having a go to get better acquainted with the road ahead.

The engine is wrapped in a strong, tubular-steel bridge-style main-frame with a bolt-on sub-frame. As with the R 1200 R, the Telelever system introduced on the R 1100 RS in 1994 has been ditched, replaced with conventional 45mm upside-down forks. The Telelever was quite a revelation 20 years ago but is not missed here, mostly due to ESA providing such a supple ride over pretty much every surface we encountered.

The RS handles very well, with no vices exposed on the day. Quite the contrary, it felt planted the whole time, allowing me the luxury of concentrating on lines rather than the road surface which makes for a relaxing ride. It's too big and heavy to ride like a sports bike, but is very capable in maintaining a good pace over a good ►



“The RS makes 92kW at 7750rpm but it’s rare you’ll go there. Instead you’ll more likely find yourself revelling in the torque”

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BMW R1200RS

QUICKSPECS

Model: BMW R 1200 RS

Prices: From \$22,950 + orc

Colours: Lupin Blue/light-grey metallic, black frame (Exclusive; Granite Grey/black metallic, grey frame)

Warranty: Two years, unlimited km, roadside assist

Servicing: 10,000km

Engine: Liquid-cooled 180-degree twin; DOHC, four valves per cylinder; 52mm fly-by-wire throttle with variable mapping; traction control

Bore & stroke: 101 x 73mm

Displacement: 1170cc

Comp: 12.5:1

Power: 92kW (125hp) @ 7750rpm

Torque: 125Nm @ 6500rpm

Transmission: Oil-bath anti-hopping clutch with six-speed gearbox, shaft final drive

Frame: Tubular-steel, bridge-style main frame with bolt-on sub-frame; engine stressed member

Suspension: 45mm upside-down forks with electronic damping adjustment, 140mm travel (claimed); Paralever mono shock rear, 140mm travel (claimed); Dynamic Electronic Suspension adjustment

Dimensions: Seat height 820mm (790-840mm optional); wet weight 236kg; max GVM 450kg; fuel capacity 18 litres (min 95 RON); wheelbase 1530mm; rake 27.7mm

Tyres: 120/70 ZR 17 front; 180/55 ZR 17 rear

Brakes: Front, 2 x four-piston calipers on 320mm rotors; rear, single twin-piston caliper, 276mm rotor; ABS

Fuel consumption: Not recorded

Likely range: 300km-plus

Verdict: As sports tourers go, simply the best, albeit at a price

distance, especially with that super-torquey engine. As the old fellas say, it's not how fast you go, it's how long you go fast.

Steering is light and accurate and cornering clearance is excellent. Not even the fast guys scraped on our test loop, which admittedly was close to Sydney and carried a lot of traffic so was less frantic than most other launches. No doubt they'd get the hero pegs down in better conditions, as Matho did on the R, but for most of us, clearance could be considered limitless.

Brakes were also well matched, with plenty of power and feel and of course ABS, which I love.

By the end of the ride, I was keen for more. Optioned up with the excellent BMW hard panniers, I couldn't think of a better bike for black-top touring, solo or two-up, and suspect it wouldn't mind a well-formed dirt road either.

The RT might be more comfortable and the GS more versatile, but for me the RS is the best fit by a country mile. **ARR**



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JACK OF ALL TRADES

From dirt-road sidetracks to scratching along your favourite backroad, the Versys 1000 will do it all





STORY: MATT SHIELDS

PHOTOS: TIM MUNRO

The term 'adventure bike' is a broadly used label these days covering everything from 21-inch front-wheeled dune blasters to 17-inch wheeled, 120kW sports-tourers that look ready to cross Australia

For all the machines in this class there is a select group that, in my mind, make the perfect roadbikes for Australia. Shod with 17in wheels, they are more like sports-tourers than adventure bikes. They have heaps of power, great handling and are comfortable to boot. Their long travel suspension makes perfect sense on our generally crappy roads and if you need to add a stretch of dirt in between, you can.

Kawasaki doesn't have a large-capacity "adventure bike" or any sub-species within this class aside from the small-wheeled one — its Versys 1000. In a hugely popular and rapidly growing class of machine, the major model update to the Versys couldn't have come at a better time.

First released in 2012, the Versys 1000 was a bigger version of the Versys 650. This is a case where the small bike bred the big bike, unlike the general trend of manufacturers going big

first, then small. As such, the big Versys shared a lot of design aspects with the smaller Versys that was built off a modular chassis and engine platform shared with the sportsbike Ninja and nakedbike ER-6N. In a day and age where these machines resemble an aged version of their youthful sportsbike brethren, the Versys 1000 needed a facelift to look the part and less like a learner bike on steroids.

The styling change does wonders to the Versys as it moves away from the dated look and syncs with the rest of the range with more angular, modern lines. The reshape has better aerodynamics and greater protection for the rider with a larger range of adjustment in the windscreen. The fairing screen is hand adjustable, but this is done on the face of the screen via two knobs that hold it in place. It's not as good as other bikes which have a more simple adjustment you can do on the fly, but then again they aren't priced anywhere as competitively as the Versys.

Sitting behind the screen you are comfortable and there's no inkling of the sporty demeanor the styling gives off. The rider's seat is long and flat so you can move around on it easily without being forced into the tank or a position you don't like. It is tall too and you sit high in the saddle, arms straight out and flat. In fact you can sit so far

"On a day mixed with dirt, slow, very fast and freeway riding there wasn't a situation where the ride wasn't enjoyable and the Versys up to the task"

back in the seat that I couldn't get a bend in my arms on the reach to the bars! I'm 6ft in the old measure and it's one of the taller bikes I've ridden in the last few years. The seat material is plush and when you take notice of other aspects of the ergonomics you can see Kawasaki's focus with this update has been heavily skewed towards improving rider comfort.

Pillion comfort is equally good on the Versys. The passenger sits a decent height above the rider, the grab rail is excellent and not a big reach and there's also a small, flat rack if they are desperate. Good for 7kg so you are best off opting for the accessory top box that doubles as a better luggage facility and a backrest.

Rubber is the word when it comes to a comfortable ride: the big, wide bars are rubber-mounted, the footpegs — rider and passenger — are rubber-topped and rubber-mounted and now



■ Superbike-sized brakes and front wheel with big suspension travel



■ Pillions will see over the rider easily from up high



■ You can go 350km before refilling the 21-litre tank



■ The rubber-mounted engine feels super-smooth

the front engine and upper crankcase mounts are on the same stuff. All these measures have gone a long way to quelling the vibes of the big four-cylinder engine on the rider and pillion.

Derived from the old litre superbike engine it may be, but the engine is 1043cc like the Z1000 nakedbike and Ninja 1000 sportsbike. Unlike the sportier Zed and Ninja, the Versys engine is, and always has been, tuned for more response in the lower rev range. This year's updates are all about refining the engine's manners in lower speed situations with greater intake volume to the airbox, passageways between the cylinders to reduce pumping loss, finer atomising injectors and revised ignition timing. Outside the engine,

the new fairing improves engine cooling enough for the water-cooled oil cooler to be dropped, saving weight.

The low-speed manners of the Versys are excellent for a big tourer. There is loads of torque low in the rev range and it's delivered as smooth as a big bike comes. The Full power or Low power modes of the Versys give a bit of variation in the characteristics of the engine, but it doesn't transform the engine immensely. Instead you get less — 25 per cent less — power in the Low mode that is delivered characteristically the same way.

Additional to the power modes is Kawasaki's traction control system (KTRC) as a rider aid. There are three settings, with Mode 1 being the

least intrusive and Mode 3 the most. Mode 1 and 2 are similar, with slightly different amounts of intervention, but Mode 3 really takes the guesswork out of tricky situations.

Weighing in at 250kg fully fuelled, the Versys isn't as lithe as some of these adventure tourers can be. But the four-cylinder engine can't tell and it hauls the Versys off the line with a smooth, strong, linear delivery of power straight off idle. Slow-speed situations are a doddle without the need for clutch and brakes to complicate things, something a big, powerful engine didn't do not that long ago!

Yet as good as the bottom end is, the top half of the rev range is equally good in its own right. ►



■ Dash set-up is simple, but with plenty of information



■ Chunky exhaust keeps the inline four super quiet until you open the throttle ...



For a rider who wants a sportier machine, this is where it is at. Power delivery is direct and strong as the revs move past 6000rpm and on towards the 10,000rpm redline. It's an element of the underlying high-performance nature of the engine that doesn't show up until you really screw the throttle around.

The gearbox is well suited to the meaty torque delivery and there's no need to go in search of revs to make progress. This engine hauls before the rev limiter gets a chance to intervene or start flickering in your face.

While the engine has had a touch up, the chassis is an area that, like the ergonomics, has had changes to improve comfort. Overall the changes aren't too different from the previous model, with a 5mm drop in seat height and 10mm bigger front brake discs the main ones on the spec sheet.

Where the improvements in the chassis come from are mostly the revamped suspension units.

Up front the cartridge-type fork now has the damping adjustment in the right fork leg and longer fork legs for increased rigidity. At the rear the shock has a slightly stiffer spring to cope with the increased payload the Versys can carry thanks to a stronger, lighter subframe. The changes to the structure go with 30 per cent less damping at both ends that is aims to give a softer, more plush, comfortable ride.

On smooth roads the Versys floats along and as road speeds increase, the compliance of the suspension remains a strong point of the package. Sure, it is not as taut as it could be when things get aggressive, but as the roads get worse the suspension action remains supple and steering precise. If you want a firmer, more direct damping, the suspension action speeds up to a rate that sportier riding requires but you have to get the tools out. Oh how primitive in a world of push-button changes ...

At the end of the day the handling is as good

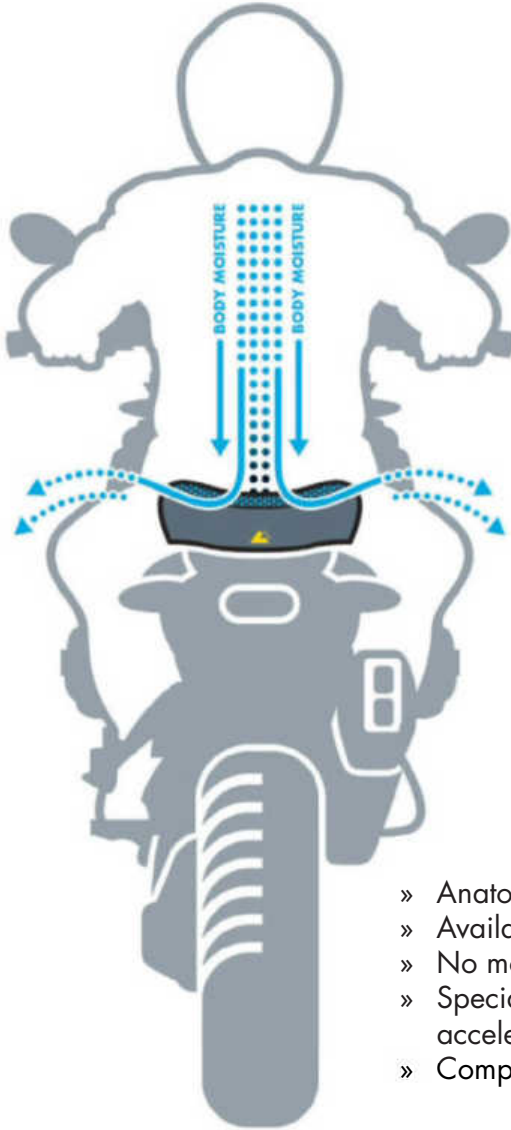
as, if not better than, many ankles up, shoulders forward sports tourers. But who wants that discomfort when fun roads are so far apart and a more relaxed riding position is going to get you to the other end more enjoyably every time?

On a day with plenty of time to spare, the great handling and adventure-style looks of the Versys inspired me to find a road less travelled to challenge that "all-roundedness" despite Kawasaki's own claims that this is not an off-road machine. Ground clearance is never an issue, although if you got serious off-road it may be, and for that reason you'd want a sump guard. But even on the sport-touring Bridgestone T30s the Versys showed all the vital signs you want in an adventure-styled sports tourer like itself to be a great performer on dirt roads and even a flooded water crossing.

There are a lot of neat touches on the Versys to suit its multifaceted job description. There's room on both guards to run one of the many ►

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KAWASAKI VERSYS 1000

QUICKSPECS

Model: Kawasaki Versys 1000

Price: \$15,999 (+orc)

Colours: Candy Burnt Orange

Warranty: Two years, unlimited distance

Servicing intervals: 6000km

Engine: Liquid-cooled, DOHC, four valve per-cylinder inline four

Bore x stroke: 77 x 56mm

Displacement: 1043cc

Compression: 10.3:1

Power: 88kW @ 9000rpm

Torque: 102Nm @ 7500rpm

Transmission: Wet multiplate slipper clutch, 6-speed gearbox, chain drive

Frame: Aluminium twin spar

Dimensions: Seat height 840mm, weight 250kg (wet), fuel capacity 21L, wheelbase 1520mm, rake 27°, trail 106mm

Suspension: Front, 43mm fork, adjustable preload and rebound damping. Rear, monoshock, adjustable rebound and preload

Brakes: Front, 2 x 310mm discs, 4-piston calipers. Rear, 250mm disc, 1-piston caliper. ABS

Tyres: Front, 120/70ZR17. Rear, 180/55ZR17

Fuel consumption: 6L/100km

Theoretical range: 350km

Verdict: Excellent value all-rounder that can be tailored to suit you

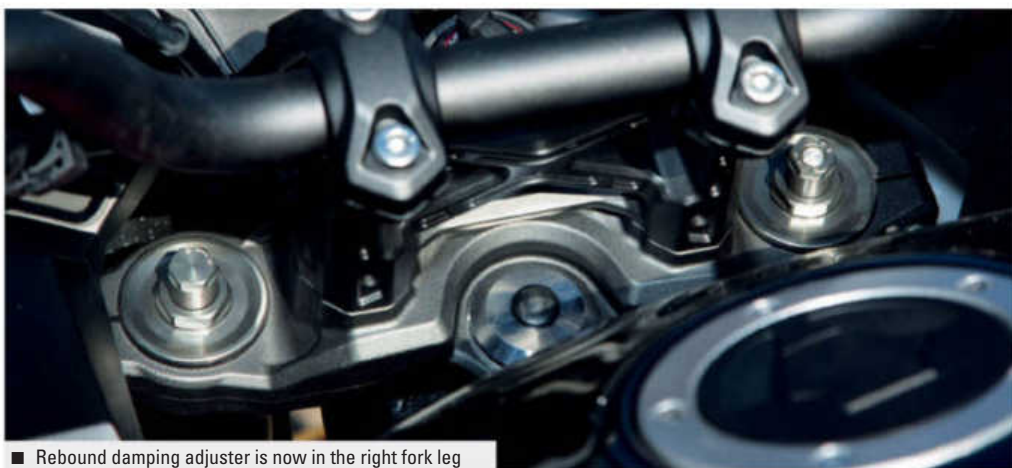


■ The accessory luggage makes the Versys quite a purposeful tourer. Spotlights are excellent in the country at night

“At the end of the day the handling is as good as, if not better than, many ankles up, shoulders forward sports-tourers. But who wants that discomfort when fun roads are so far apart and a more relaxed riding position is going to get you to the other end more enjoyably every time?”

dual-purpose tyres for big adventure bikes if that tickles your fancy. The accessory power socket is a great standard feature placed on the dash right where you'd want your GPS or phone mounted — and it's not one of those silly little ones either, but a proper cigarette lighter-sized one. The tool roll is in its own sealed plastic canister under the seat and leaves more room, although there isn't much there — maybe space for wets and some thin gloves at a squeeze. But you are best off with accessory panniers that the new subframe design accommodates without ugly brackets and the like. The bike even looks good without them in place. Sporty touches like span-adjustable levers, petal disc rotors and 180-section rear tyre are the sports side of things taken care of. Oh, and the 1043cc 88kW four-cylinder engine of course.

But where the Versys excels is truly as a jack of all trades. With a 350km range out of the 21-litre tank on a day mixed with dirt, slow, very fast and freeway riding there wasn't a situation where the ride wasn't enjoyable and the Versys up to the task. Sure, I'd want it lighter and more aggressive in the sporty stuff, but in every other aspect — most especially as a tourer — this is a machine that does its job without question. And priced at just under \$16K, it's a lot of value for such a lot of motorcycle. In fact, I reckon you'd be hard pressed finding a better-value motorcycle that suits Aussie roads more than the Versys. **ARR**



■ Rebound damping adjuster is now in the right fork leg



■ Proper-sized accessory power socket on the dash



■ Fairing cuts spread the air very effectively

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Brimming with performance and aided by top-notch electronics, the Tuono is a leashed beast ready to be set free ...





“The numbers tell you most of the story: 1100cc, 184 kilos (dry), 175hp and 121Nm of torque are figures not to be sniffed at and scream fun with a capital F-bomb”

**STORY NIGEL CROWLEY
PHOTOS: TIM MUNRO**

Riding the Tuono is like sitting astride an angry predator whose diet consists solely of petrol, tyres and the occasional side dish of demerit points — and it's always starving.

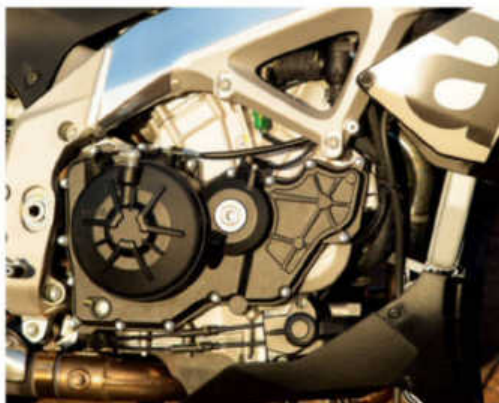
Prodding the starter elicits an evil snarl from the extremely loud standard pipe, the throttle giving an automatic blip as the motor fires up, making unprepared onlookers flinch. Lovely stuff.

First gear engages with a solid crunch and the bike lurches forward an inch against the brakes, as if eager to get on with the hunt. The new bodywork is a killer too — much more aggressive than the previous goggle-eyed Transformer look and more effective at parting the air. It now mimics its racier sibling, the RSV4, more closely and is a whole lot better for it.

From the triple headlights up front to the superbly designed rear light integrated into the

undertray, this tough-looking bike is bristling with nice touches. The wheels, for example, with impossibly delicate spokes protruding from hollow hubs pared back to the bone, or the finning of the radiator core that's so fine you can barely see it.

For a nakedbike (if that definition still applies to a bike wearing this much plastic), and despite a 15mm lower seat height than before, the riding position feels quite bum-up, head-down, and the reach to the flat-ish, matte-black 'bars puts a fair bit of weight towards the front. It certainly helps make it feel planted though and, with the new, more luxurious and softer padding on the seat, the overall riding position is unexpectedly comfortable even when droning along the freeway. Getting to the fuel light at around 190km without a sore backside is no problem, whereupon you have about 35km left at the 8.2L/100km average we got across the whole test. (It's easily possible to get worse than 9.5L/100km if you use the throttle the way God intended, mind you.)



↑ There's a lot of V4 packed in there



↑ They aren't top-spec Monoblocs, but brilliant nonetheless



↑ Easy access to the adjusters on the Sachs shock



↑ The quickshifter makes life easier

I've loved Aprilias ever since I rode an RSV way back in 2000. In fact, I bought one the next day and it's still in my garage. For me the big Aprilias have always been about the motor, and that original 60-degree, V-twin had me hooked the minute it hoiked the front wheel into the air the first time I gunned it. It was impossible not to enjoy surfing around on all that grunt, whether in town or on track, and 15 years later the Tuono RR produces the same effect.

The numbers tell you most of the story: 1100cc, 184kilos (dry), 175hp and 121Nm of torque are figures not to be sniffed at and scream fun with a capital F-bomb. The V4 motor feels superb, with huge amounts of power, and is incredibly smooth, creating almost zero vibration anywhere in the rev range, although perhaps losing some of the character of the lumpy old V-twin version as a consequence. Not to worry though, this bike has character

aplenty in other areas and is 10 times more captivating than my RSV ever was, as well as being crammed full of technology filtered down from Aprilia's SBK involvement.

I hate to just reel off chunks of the owner's manual, but the electronics package is such a huge part of this bike that it can't be ignored. For a start there are the three ride-by-wire engine maps which are different to the previous model's in almost every way. Your choices, in ascending order, are now Sport, Track and Race. They all have full power in every gear and throughout the rev range, although the Sport map has a softer throttle response than the other two. The main difference is the amount of engine braking you get: most in Sport and least in Race. Don't be concerned about the lack of a dedicated rain mode either, as you can readily dial the traction control up to its maximum setting

THE COMPETITION

BMW S1000R

Derived from the awesome S1000RR, this is perhaps the obvious other choice if you're after a big-bore naked bike. It's outgunned in the power and torque stakes by the Tuono but that doesn't detract from the fact that this is one excellent motorcycle. In common with the Aprilia, it has a very comprehensive electronics package and can be specced with semi-active suspension.

KTM 1290 Superduke R

The concept shots of the Superduke had everyone drooling over their mouse mats, and the reality didn't disappoint. This is one headbanging bit of kit. Its extra 200cc over the Aprilia helps liberate 180hp and 144Nm, so describing it as explosive hardly does it justice. Fortunately it comes with ABS, TC and three engine maps.

Ducati Monster 1200 S

Featuring the latest 11-degree Testastretta motor, the top-spec Monster looks sensational, and with 145hp and 124Nm it's no slouch either, albeit not quite as exciting to ride as the Tuono. It also comes with riding and power modes as well as a Ducati Safety Package which includes ABS and traction control. This would be the more sensible offering of the three if that word still means anything in this context.

of eight (via the + and - paddles on the left switchblock). Even though this doesn't dial down the power output of the motor or soften the throttle response, the way the traction control works (which is a system based on modulating the butterflies rather than cutting the ignition) effectively does this for you, and unlike chopping the spark, is super-smooth to boot. Combined with using the maximum ABS setting of three, riding in the rain shouldn't be a worry.

The traction control is further enhanced by what Aprilia calls its "slip control" system, which modulates the power delivery based not only on differentials in wheel speeds, but ▶



↑ There's not much space in the dash area, but plenty packed in there



↑ Cute rear end isn't built for touring



↑ Where's the phone number for Radguard?

“The torque off the bottom is phenomenal and the rush of power at the top bonkers; every ride leaves you sweaty and slightly madder than the last”





TECH TONIC

Want to go faster on track? The Tuono can teach you how. You can now plug your smartphone into the bike and make like a racer by adjusting the traction control and anti-wheelie on a corner-by-corner basis in real time via the Active electronic set-up feature. Using the phone's GPS function, the system knows exactly where you are on the track at any given time and based on the rider's selections, makes continuous adjustments of the electronics package. The Adaptive race assistant feature provides real-time feedback by comparing previous best lap times, and indicates where to brake and accelerate to improve the time. And if all that's not enough to take in, the Advanced telemetry dashboard allows your phone to display a host of parameters such as instant power and torque, percentage of power available, rear wheel thrust and slippage, acceleration and lean angle. Just remember to look up once in a while.

also on the lean angle of the motorcycle. Very reassuring. The APRC (Aprilia Performance Ride Control) package also includes three-stage wheelie control which, with this amount of torque on tap, helps considerably and allows the front wheel to hover above the tarmac on corner exit in a very exciting yet controlled ►

QUICKSPECS

Model: Aprilia Tuono V4 1100RR

Price: \$23,000 (ride-away)

Colours: Portimao Grey and Donington Blue

Warranty: Two years, unlimited distance

Servicing intervals: 20,000km

Engine: Liquid-cooled, DOHC, 16-valve, 65° V4. Variable mapping, variable traction, wheelie and launch control

Bore x stroke: 81 x 52.3mm

Displacement: 1077cc

Compression: 13.5:1

Power: 129kW @ 13,000rpm

Torque: 121Nm @ 10,500rpm

Transmission: Wet multiplate slipper clutch, 6-speed gearbox, chain drive

Frame: Aluminium twin spar

Dimensions: Seat height 825mm, weight 184kg (dry), fuel capacity 18.5L, wheelbase 1450mm, rake 24.7°, trail 98mm

Suspension: Front, 43mm USD fork, fully adjustable. Rear, monoshock, fully adjustable

Brakes: Front, 2 x 320mm discs, 4-piston calipers. Rear, 240mm disc, 2-piston caliper. Switchable ABS

Tyres: Front, 120/70ZR17. Rear, 190/55ZR17

Fuel consumption: 8.2L/100km

Theoretical range: 225km

Verdict: A simply staggering motorcycle in every department



“This bike is so addictive it could easily find itself declared a controlled substance”

manner, even on full throttle. The steering damper helps ensure it doesn't tie itself in knots. It also combines with the launch control settings to maximise acceleration from a standing start. This is strictly a race function only and shouldn't be used at the traffic lights — well, not all of them. When engaged it allows you to keep the throttle nailed from a standing start and hammer up the 'box with the aid of the quick-shifter, while the electronics control front-wheel lift and rear-wheel spin. Hello holeshot.

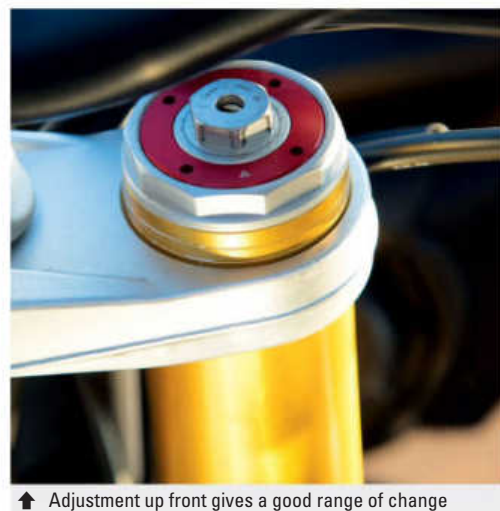
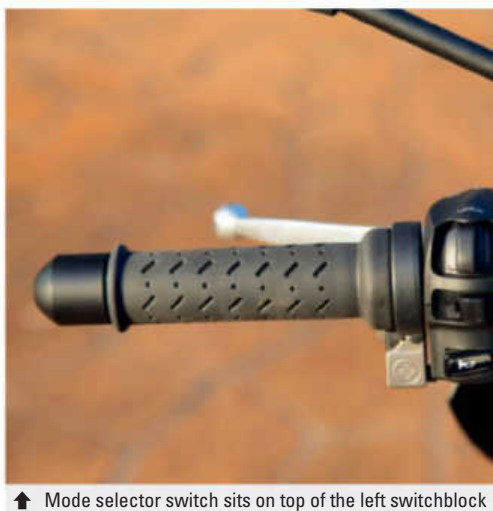
Talking of quick-shifters, this is perhaps the

best I've ever used on the road. Its function varies depending on three different RPM thresholds and is as seamless at 50 as it is flat-out. It's also surprisingly useable even in traffic, which is a first for me.

Despite the RR not having the full-blown Öhlins suspension and steering damper of the Factory (reflected in the three grand price difference), the Sachs stuff it comes with is still excellent. It's compliant yet taut, allowing you to ride around in comfort all day but, when the speed goes up, keeps both ends under superb control. The action ►

TART UP YOUR TUONO

There's a heap of stuff to bling up your bike or make it more track ready, including an array of racing levers and very sexy rear-set kits, as well as a reverse-pattern gear linkage. There are also some seriously nice-looking Akrapovic full systems and end-cans, as well as plenty of carbon bits such as mudguards and side panels. If the standard wheels aren't doing it for you, there are forged aluminium items in black, red and gold too, and for the road there are various luggage options and alternative mirrors.



↑ Mode selector switch sits on top of the left switchblock

↑ Adjustment up front gives a good range of change

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APRILIA TUONO 1100 RR

of the fully adjustable, 43mm, USD forks is particularly impressive and feedback from the front tyre superb.

Other changes over the previous model include a 4mm-longer swingarm for improved rear-wheel grip and a steeper head-angle to claw back some of that extra wheelbase and to help keep the steering sharp, what with the reduced leverage from the narrower handlebars too.

Although I initially thought the steering could have been lighter, I soon got used to it, but using a good bit of body-English definitely elicits the best results. What's more, the bike's inherent stability allows you to carve around bends on a rock-solid line at impressive speeds and massive lean angles. The huge grip from the dual compound Pirelli Diablo Rosso Corsa tyres add to the fun.

The chassis is taut, reacting to your every input, yet not too rigid, allowing you to feel exactly what's happening between the road and the tyres and every subtle move of the suspension. The confidence this bike inspires

is amazing and I doubt there's much out there quicker from A to B. The torque off the bottom is phenomenal and the rush of power at the top bonkers; every ride leaves you sweaty and slightly madder than the last.

Yet, on Monday morning, commuting on it is a doddle. Feet-up lane splitting is easy thanks to the bike's excellent balance and narrow 'bars, although the slightly limited steering lock can take you by surprise. Also, despite their huge stopping power, the brakes aren't at all grabby and the mirrors seem to fit between everything while still providing a good view behind. Even that fruity exhaust helps by alerting cars to your imminent arrival, a few raucous blips causing a Moses-like parting of the way.

So what's not to like? An annoying snatch in the drivetrain coming on and off the throttle at low speeds is about all I can come up with (slightly less apparent in Sports mode). It does use a fair bit of fuel but if that's really a concern, you're probably on the wrong bike.

What's to love is just how brilliant you feel riding this bike. The incredible engine, the

superb suspension, the huge grip, the faultless traction and wheelie control and the ABS all combine to create an exceptional feeling of being in charge. Even though this bike is properly fast, you're not hanging on for dear life to a machine that's on the edge of getting away from you. Rather, you're the boss, telling it exactly what to do and it complying without offering up any surprises — well, until you glance at the speedo maybe.

If all this makes it sound like the Tuono might tempt you into areas of naughtiness that could see you sewing mailbags for a few months, well that's certainly one possibility. But bear in mind that any big-bore bike can get you into strife with a careless flick of the wrist these days. What the Tuono brings to the party is not only a massive amount of riding pleasure, but, with its sophisticated electronics package, a huge margin of safety. It makes you feel like a better rider than you are and at \$23,000 ride away, is massive bang for your buck. This bike is so addictive it could easily find itself declared a controlled substance. **ARR**



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MOVING ON

After three-and-a-half years on the road, Sherri Jo is home and on a new machine to explore Australia





STORY SHERRI JO WILKINS
PHOTOS DANNY WILKINSON

The journey around the world on a KTM 690 Enduro R was a long one, more than three-and-a-half years actually. We climbed mountains, crossed rivers, jarred and knocked ourselves down countless rough rigid roads. Through the freezing cold of northern Russia and Alaska to the deep, dark heat and humidity of the Amazon rainforest, we did the hard yards together.

But the time came to officially retire my dear friend, the KTM 690 Enduro. That little single-cylinder motor ticked over until it couldn't tick no more. It travelled well through 46 of the 49 countries we visited. I have nothing but praise for the bike I chose to take on that journey. But those last three countries seemed to take their toll. There didn't seem to be anything we could do or alter to the bike to make it happy again.

Most people in the motorcycle community would say the bike needed the motor rebuilt well before it started breaking down. They'd say it's not possible to keep a single-cylinder going with that many kilometres on it. Nobody has travelled that far on a 690 before that I am aware of, so there was nothing to compare it to. I didn't see the need to fix something that wasn't broken, a life lesson learned long ago.

"But surely," they'd say, "it's going to die on you, SJ!" They were right. It died a few times on





“To this day the tank remains my favourite accessory of all time. There is no way I could have ridden to many of the far-away places in the world without the extra fuel I could carry with a Safari tank”

the last leg of the journey. It was revived often with a lot of invested money, but we eventually made it home to Adelaide with 132,000km on the clock. I never rebuilt the motor. I'm not a mechanic, but I've asked a lot of people who have done rebuilds on their own bikes. Every one of them said the bike will never be the same, even after a rebuild.

So what's a girl to do who has a wonderful, yet dead-tired bike in permanent retirement? Get a new one, of course! My brain was full of ideas and dreams for a long time. I was really happy with the 690 for the most part, especially for the type of travel I did on it. It was small and light enough for me to pick up on my own. Should I just get the same bike? No, I thought. It's time for a bit of an upgrade if I can get away with it. Because I know that I won't be doing world tour number two anytime soon, I am mostly looking forward to exploring my own country on a motorcycle, something I have not done yet. I like the sound of a larger bike. They simply look more comfortable. I'm hoping my skill levels are good enough to handle a bigger bike as well.

Last year I was at the annual Touratech Travel Event in Bright, Victoria, with my KTM. The bike was struggling as it had been for the last several months. Robin Box, from Touratech Australia and organiser of the event, suggested I ride his Triumph Tiger 800XC for a bit to see if I liked it. I decided to, but I told him I was worried that it would be too large and heavy for me. “No, no, no, just hop on and give it a go ...”

As soon as I was away I was like, “Whoa, are the wheels even touching the ground?” Honestly, I've said this a thousand times since that day. It felt like I was riding on air. We rode up the small dirt tracks to Porepunkah, an area in the mountains with great views once you reach the top.

There were really sharp and damp gravel curves, long drop-offs, fallen branches and some small water crossings. Nothing too difficult, but I still couldn't stop thinking, “Am I riding on air?” I didn't even feel the bike ride over that fallen tree branch. I couldn't believe the power to climb up hill out of a sharp curve, in gravel, still in third gear.

My other bike would have gurgled and spat and stalled if I tried that. It was ridiculously smooth and easy on the Tiger compared with the KTM that allowed me to feel so much that I even felt the dotted white line road markings on bitumen if I ran over one. ►



“There are plenty of big adventures to keep me busy around Australia for quite a while. I may not be the best rider in the world, but what is important to me is fun and adventure”

The next day we had the opportunity to ride a very long mountain track that was saturated with deep mud as far as the eye could see. As much as I loved this Triumph experience, I looked at the mud and thought, “Uh oh, now I’m in trouble. I’m not sure I can do this, but there’s nothing I can do about it now!”

I’m not willing to embarrass myself by stopping and saying, “I can’t do that!” Especially among a group of motorcycle adventurers who are well aware I’ve completed “Sherri Jo’s ‘Because I Can’ World Tour”. But I was so nervous to be on a larger heavier bike that I was sure I’d be falling over continuously.

I started off slowly in the mud and completely convinced myself that it was too slippery. So I let my feet dangle and waddled a bit while praying that nobody was watching. Some of the riders passed me and I already felt embarrassed enough. I thought to myself, I should speed up a bit, it doesn’t really feel too slippery. Still watching my lines to get the easier and hopefully less deep bits of mud, I didn’t find I was falling over like I had envisioned.

It was no problem and I couldn’t believe it; this bike isn’t fazed by anything. I, on the other hand, get fazed quite easily. Not long into this lengthy road of pure mud, I was cruising right along, even passing other riders. It was so fun and easy that I was actually aiming for the bad bits. The deeper, nastier mud, the better.

I was sold. I wanted a Triumph Tiger 800 XC. Nothing against KTM. If I wanted to upgrade from the 690, the next option in the range was the 1050, which was twice the size. I just don’t see the point of having a bike that big if you want to live an adventurous life. I met

countless people doing long-distance tours in the world and so many of them on the exact same bike, the BMW R1200GS. Many of them were limited by what they could do, especially if alone, on the challenging tracks and those challenging tracks seemed to take you to the most interesting places. The majority of them were sold on the idea of owning this big bike due to one luring film of two blokes who inspired them.

Most hadn’t considered those two guys had support vehicles to carry their gear and help pick them up when they fell over. The big 1200s work well if you keep to standard tracks and roads, but for most of us novices the rough tracks can be too difficult and dangerous on a bike the size of a car. Horses for courses, but I am more than certain I don’t want a bike this big.

So now I have a beautiful new Tiger and am totally in love with it, I might add. What’s next? Explore Australia! Obviously from living on the road for three-and-a-half years, I have my list of must-haves for any bike I plan to travel with. The first time I set up a bike I had no experience. I just listened to the many people who gave me advice and did as much as I could. This time I know what I want.

First up is the Safari fuel tank. To this day the tank remains my favourite accessory of all time. There is no way I could have ridden to many of the far-away places in the world without the extra fuel I could carry with a Safari tank.

The original tank would have only gotten me about 220km before I needed to refuel. This would have been a huge problem in several parts of the world, mainly Russia, northern





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↑ You'd be happy if you scored a new bike too!



“Because I know that I won't be doing world tour number two anytime soon, I am mostly looking forward to exploring my own country on a motorcycle, something I have not done yet”

Canada, Chile and Argentina. It most likely would have limited me to more boring, beaten-track routes to be safe. It's hard to fathom how many things I would have missed out on if I didn't have the fuel range.

For the Triumph Tiger 800XC, the Safari tank gives an extra 11 litres of fuel to the existing 19 litres. With 30 litres total to travel on, I am able to ride between 500-550km in one fill, depending on the terrain (and wind). This will come in handy for the remote parts of Australia I intend to explore.

More must-haves come from Touratech Australia, the hub of all motorcycle adventure gear. Most important are the panniers and tank bag. These are a no-brainer for travelling long distance. The hard panniers work for me because they secure to the bike and are lockable. If I want to hop off the bike and have a wander around town for lunch, I can

do so without worrying about the things locked in the panniers.

Another big must-have is the Touratech GPS bracket and lock. I travelled through some of the most crime-ridden countries on the planet and I came home with the same GPS, which I rarely removed from the bike because it was secure. I've also got a nice new yellow Touratech Ortlieb waterproof bag for carrying gear. This simple product is worth its weight in gold for how it keeps my belongings dry and perfect. I also love my little Touratech teeth straps. I use them to secure extra things to the bike when needed, particularly my thermos full of hot tea. I also use them to tie things to trees at night (laundry or food in bear country).

Last is the headlight guard. I am usually the slower one in the group so you can say I often eat dust that is filled with small stones. I might not be protecting my own teeth, but I will

do my best to protect the headlights. I could carry on about how many things I love from Touratech, but the must-haves are already on and ready to travel!

My first adventure is planned for two weeks from now, riding through the famous Flinders Ranges up the Strzelecki Track, if it's open, to Cameron Corner and back home through Broken Hill. I'm told there will be a full mix of riding adventure on this loop: sand, mud, gravel — the lot.

There are plenty of big adventures to keep me busy around Australia for quite a while. I may not be the best rider in the world, but what is important to me is fun and adventure. I enjoy living the real, wild and free life rather than the plastic controlled life. And to achieve this, there is no better way than to explore on a well-equipped adventurous motorcycle. **ARR**



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MOTO GUZZI V7 MKII

PIPE WORK

PHOTOS : JULIE CROWLEY

I've put a bit over 1200km on the V7 in the last month through a mixture of commuting, longer-distance rides and some posing at the coffee shop. It has remained a fun, comfortable and easy-to-live-with bike as well as being 100 per cent reliable. What's more, its abilities as a lane-splitting tool seem to have only improved with familiarity. However, the time has come to start its transformation into a scrambler. Originally the idea was to do the pipes and the tyres at the same time, but given how dramatically the knobbies will change the look of the bike we might leave that till last on the list, a sort of final reveal. Besides, the pipe alone makes a dramatic enough statement so we've just done that this month.

Removing the old twin-pipes and silencers and fitting the two-onto-one high-level set-up takes a good few hours. It's not massively complicated work but there's a fair bit to do getting it all lined up properly and re-fitting

the two exhaust probes. The finish and build quality of the Moto Guzzi branded Arrow pipe is exceptionally good and it looks fantastic once fitted. There's now additional heat-shielding over the previous version of this pipe, especially near your ankle. This does take up some extra room and if you're wearing thick boots they will rub against the pipe, forcing

your foot towards the outside of the footpeg. This isn't a huge problem but you will notice it. However, there's no need to worry about melting your favourite footwear as the heat-shielding really does do its job, keeping the pipe cool where it needs to.

The single silencer isn't dramatically louder than the standard pipes but it definitely makes





↑ The sidestand now sticks out oddly with the pipe removed



↑ One of the more glorious header pipe configurations on a motorcycle



↑ The pipe pushes the rider's right leg out a bit



↑ Pipe mount on pillion footrest bracket now looks odd. Angle grinder time if you owned it!

a nicer, more aggressive noise than the original system, which was about as raucous as a popcorn maker. What's more, it seems to have cleaned up the fuelling somewhat and the motor now feels like it can breathe a bit better, running smoother for that and being less snatchy right off the bottom.

Despite really enhancing the overall look of the bike, there are however a few left-over odds and ends which could be dealt with slightly more thoughtfully. For a start there are a couple of empty mounting holes on the ends of the rear footpeg hangers which used to help locate the silencers on either side. They aren't horrendous but maybe they could have come with rubber blanks or something to fill the obvious space. Failing that you

could always just unbolt the footpeg hangers completely if you fancied a really clean look and don't need them. In addition the tang on the sidestand now sticks out a considerable distance as it loops under and around the now removed left-hand silencer. Again it's not a complete eyesore but if there were an alternative without it, the kit would seem more complete.

Looks-wise the left-hand side of the bike is now very exposed and minimalist, the single pipe running down the opposite side. It's a look I really like and what's more it makes cleaning that side of the bike much easier. On the right-hand side the high-level muffler looks fantastic (I particularly like the sweep of the header-pipes across the front of the engine) and gives an even more authentically retro look to the V7.

The price is a not inconsiderable \$2067 including GST, but it makes a huge difference to the look and appeal of the bike and you could happily stop there if

you wanted, even recouping some of that cost by selling the original pipes.

Now we've started I'm really looking forward to adding the rest of the scrambler kit over time. I haven't decided where we're going next but new rear shocks and mudguards might be on the cards for next month. Stay tuned. — NIGEL CROWLEY

“It seems to have cleaned the fuelling up somewhat and the motor now feels like it can breathe a bit better, running smoother for that and being less snatchy right off the bottom.”



BMW R1200RT

BOXER STICKS

The R1200RT felt no different after having its 10,000km service. To me that's a good sign. There'd been little or no deterioration of anything over months and many kilometres.

That doesn't mean things didn't need attention, of course. If that were the case there'd be no need for routine servicing. So it had an oil change and the usual bits and pieces that the schedule demands, as well as a change of brake fluid. All-up price for this service was a bit over \$400. Considering this is an annual service for many owners, that's pretty low running costs.

The techs at Procycles looked at a small ding in the front rim and pondered whether it was bad enough to require replacing the wheel. I'd spotted it a while ago but figured it was small enough to ignore, and they agreed. I'm not sure when the damage happened, but the way our roads are I'm not too surprised. I've seen it on many bikes over the years.

Before the RT went in for its service, I'd tested the S1000XR (that report is coming up in issue #121). Like the RT, the XR has the fabulous Quickshift Pro electronic gear-changing. Swapping back from slick XR to boxer-powered RT, I realised the twin-cylinder

bike's downshifts were a little notchy at times. I asked the guys at Procycles to double-check the system for me — maybe fresh oil would improve it, maybe something else needed attention, or maybe it was simply the fact that the boxer's gearbox is not as sweet as the S1000's gearbox. Procycles downloaded a new gear-change program for the RT (special programs for manual gearboxes, eh? Who would have thunk it!) and sent me on my way.

The downshifts felt a fraction heavier but still exhibited that bit of notchiness. I think it was just the comparison between R1200 and S1000 that brought it to my attention, and it's an inherent part of RT ownership. The water-cooled boxer is a very clever and advanced design but it's still a boxer motor and apparently no amount of engineering excellence, nor nearly 100 years' experience with them, can create a gearbox that's as light, quick and easy as those in good inline four-cylinder powerplants.

By the time I'd ridden home on my usual 300km route, I'd stopped thinking about stomping down through the gears with sporty abandon again and was enjoying myself thoroughly. As much as I can appreciate the smoothness and sophistication of the S1000 engine, I'll take the character and machismo of a boxer any day.

It's one topic I often consider as I ride

the RT. BMW's 1600cc six-cylinder tourers are in another league for sleek running and effortless performance, and I can see the attraction of them. Would I be happier on one? Moot point, really, because it's very much a subjective call. You're looking at a good \$5000 price hike to the K1600, which is significant for many buyers, but to my mind the bigger difference — the thing that should really decide which way you'd go — is the rugged feel of the boxer engine or the ultra-smoothness of the six.

There might be room for a four-cylinder S1000 version between them, though I reckon that'd just crowd BMW's range of tourers and make the choice confusing.

Anyway, I got home, dismounted, looked at the big boxer and was glad that this was my bike for 2016. It has character, performance, practicality and dollops of fun. Exactly what I need.

— MICK MATHESON

“As much as I can appreciate the smoothness and sophistication of the S1000 engine, I'll take the character and machismo of a boxer any day”



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DOING THE TIME WARP

Cuban society is like no other — colourful and oddly held together by unwavering patriotism. But change is on the horizon

Talk of visiting Cuba one day has been bandied around my family for years. I remember heading to the movies to see *The Motorcycle Diaries* with my old man when it was first released, then reading the book to find out more on Che Guevara, before eventually becoming infatuated by the Cuban revolution. A lot of mystery surrounds the country, with some making it out to be a dangerous society ruled by a communist regime. Yet speak to any Canadian and they'll tell you it's their equivalent of our Bali — cheap beers and women.

With so many differing opinions, taking that giant leap to book the trip was daunting. A lot of research is needed, which is made harder by the rather basic websites produced by the under-developed nation. I found the best form of advice came through good ol' word of mouth. Finally, instead of it being a "Geez, I'd love to see Cuba one day" rambling at barbecues, I agreed on a date with my dad, aided by motorcycle touring company Edelweiss. ►





↑ Fossil got the V-Rod.

Let's not beat around the bush — the flight is terrible, even when things do go to plan (see breakout). The quirkiness begins the moment you land; an insecticide spray douses the cabin, forms for visas are handed out and the beady eyes of guards hit you. The actual process of customs interrogation and sniffer dogs isn't too dissimilar to Australia, it's just the 1980s decor and uniforms that are out of place.

Taking that first step out of the airport is when the realisation hits. The sound of 1950s cars and motorcycles roaring past is drowned out by locals arguing loudly in Spanish, only pausing for a gasp through their cigars.

After hailing a taxi, purely because it was a '57 Chevy, we arrived at the Hotel Sevilla in Havana. Now the time warp really began. With the lack of trade due to an embargo,

the country relies heavily on tourism. The hotel was littered with photos from the revolution and offered a 24-hour bar, perfectly targeting the majority of tourists' reasons for being there: to drink rum, smoke cigars and experience the history first-hand.

Locals have also perfected the art of scamming, with us two newbies getting snagged a ripper by a bloke offering us tickets to the Buena Vista Social Club, which eventually turned into us buying over-priced drinks and trinkets. We high-tailed back to the hotel to meet the group we would be riding with.

Sitting down at the bar, observing the route ahead of us printed on a large map, the situation felt like the beginning of a joke — two Aussies, a Swiss, two Poms, a Canadian, a Frenchman and an American



↑ Most gas stations only stock 83 octane petrol used by locals, so stations stocking "especial" 95 octane were few and far between



↑ Havana Club museum



↑ Old American cars rule in downtown Havana

walk into a Cuban bar ... Luckily it was an absolutely fantastic group of people that we shared many jokes with along the way.

After the introduction, our Cuban guide took us for a walk around Old Havana. I can't stress enough how much better it was having local knowledge this time round. Pathways appeared that we clearly missed only hours earlier. The whole city is a photographer's wet dream; at no point was there a scene that wasn't photo-worthy. Everything is just so far removed from what we know in the western world — it's basically incomparable to any other civilisation on Earth.

At our first dinner, the questions started flooding in for our guide. Why this hotel? Basically, Cuba runs on a star rating just like anywhere else. Except all hotels are government-owned and have the power to move you to any other hotel within that same star rating if they wish. After having this happen a number of times with the more upmarket hotels due to large Canadian tour groups getting preference, our guide settled on mediocre digs to ensure our stay didn't shift at the last minute. And that's the short answer not involving complicated laws, the privately run casa particulars and government dealings. Once our guide Carlos's food had gone cold from talking, he gave us the blanket answer that everything in Cuba has a complicated web of past happenings/new laws that make it the way it is, while some things just are this way because Castro says so. I nodded and took a bite of what I think was pork stew.

The first stretch on the bikes to Playa Larga had arrived and my Harley couldn't be more lairy. Skulls on every chrome piece, with a USA logo on the tank. Picturing the absolute polar opposite of what would suit the Cuban roads ahead, this was it. Our first stop was the Revolution Museum, a must see. The bullet holes from the revolutionaries storming the



↑ Just another daily driver in Havana

“Much of the country's history was built around sugar cane and tobacco fields, along with the slaves who harvested them”

building still adorn the marble walls, while actual American fighter jets shot down through the turmoil sit peacefully outside, unrestricted. Memorabilia of similar significance in Canberra would be guarded by 10in-thick glass and a snoring security guard.

Once out of the city, the real Cuba appears. There are potholes stretching further than the road itself, horses and carts in one lane moving at walking pace, trucks speeding past in the opposite lane taking up the majority of the road, and all the while your mind is battling the instinct to ride on the left like home. Even crossing roads takes a little getting used to. ►

GETTING THERE

The reason Cuba is such an obscure trip for Australians would have to be the distance. Although diplomacy may change soon, we were still advised not to enter through America, rather Canada or Mexico. The latter of those was almost double the price, even though it is a far shorter distance, so we settled for Adelaide to Sydney, then Vancouver, then Toronto, and finally Havana ... well, that was the itinerary anyway.

After taking off from Vancouver, the captain informed passengers that the landing gear had not retracted, necessitating an immediate U-turn. We were only in the air for about 10 minutes, followed by what felt like 10 hours of arguing and re-booking of flights. Taking the same route would have landed us two days late for the tour due to missing connections, so instead a flight and overnight stay in Calgary was booked, followed by a 6am departure the next morning to Varadero, the only other major airport in Cuba. Our luggage, for some unknown reason, was still sent to Havana, leaving us with only our carry-on and the clothes on our backs. Walking out of Calgary airport into freezing temperatures with a copy of ARR and a pack of jelly beans to keep me warm was not ideal.

To be fair, the shuttle bus from Varadero to Havana provided some comfortable sight-seeing and was made sweeter by our driver offering us a cold beer out of his personal esky. We waited until 1am to claim our baggage, all the while trying to explain our situation in broken Spanglish to the baggage claim attendants. The moral of the story? Aim to land at least a day or two ahead of the tour start date as Murphy's Law applies ten-fold in Cuba. Also, if you're flying Air Canada, keep your fingers and toes crossed until you land. Seriously.



↑ As well as old American cars, you also see Iron Curtain bikes, such as this East German MZ

All this is forgotten when rolling into a small town to receive a rock star reception. People have never seen anything like these bikes in the flesh. The whole group would be instantly bombarded with questions, albeit in Spanish. Such is the erratic development of the country that it wasn't unusual to see a man pull up his horse and whip out an iPhone to take photos — just no uploading to the outlawed Facebook.

With the plan to stay in Viñales for a couple of nights, we still completed lots of country miles. It was never draining thanks to stopping for a break every hour, a

company policy. The urge to keep riding and explore at stumps was strong, but there was never a dull night either. We quickly worked out that Cubans know their pork well, while beef is most likely not beef. To be fair, you can't complain about a meal with the views we had, along with the blaring salsa music adding spice to the bland rice. The kitchens aren't quite up to our food safety standards, but that just adds a little exhilaration to the experience ... unless you're experiencing it for the next 24 hours, on a Harley, on bumpy roads, in humid weather. I owe my sanity to a Canadian packet of Gastro-Stop.

Leaving town, the next few days of visiting Santa Clara and Cayo Santa Maria were a blur. There really is so much to take in along the roads; on the right a man ploughing his fields with an ox and cart, while on the left screams billboard after billboard of revolutionary propaganda. This becomes a theme for the whole trip, with every workplace, school and towns in general emblazoned with messages from Fidel Castro. However, many murals are starting to fade, much like the people's faith in their government.

With countless roads yet to be paved,





↑ Only 50km in and the troubles begin. Luckily our local guide recognises the similarities between this donk and his '50s HD

“The Harley-Davidson itself is seen as a sign of rebellion due to its American heritage, the main reason Carlos rides them”

Unfortunately lots of highway stood between us and the twisties near civilisation. Just when you started to relax and get lost in the scenery, a pothole or stray dog would appear to shake things up.

Pulling into our hotel, an East German flair became apparent. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, much of Cuba's resources came

from the communist regime. The same goes for Russia, made very evident through the Jawa and MZ motorcycles, along with waiters having names like Vladimir and Alexander.

Sitting down to lunch at a beach in Cienfuegos, more questions came out about the latest talks with the US. The Harley-Davidson itself is seen as a sign of rebellion due to its American heritage, the main reason Carlos rides them. But the overall sentiment is that people have moved on, just like farmers in Vietnam don't hate Americans and we don't hate Germans. It's how tourists act once the flood gates open that will determine the style of welcome they receive.

With the tour flying by, we reached a two-night stop at the 500-year-old town of Trinidad. Unchanged cobblestone roads wound us into town, with the architecture and layout making it feel like a time machine had spat us out as we watched kids ►



MAN IN THE KNOW

It was made clear early on that having a local guide is essential to getting the most out of Cuba. In fact, for a group our size it's mandatory to have a government guide oversee the tour — just another of the many weird rules when visiting. We had a local Harley enthusiast tag along as a second guide who made the trip run far smoother. Even if you do speak Spanish, locals are willing to go that extra mile for a fellow countryman. Plus, it's handy to know the good local haunts just like any other corner of the globe.



↑ The main square and surrounding roads in Trinidad are still paved with the original cobblestones from 500 years ago



↑ Just one of the entrances to the Viñales caves that pop up throughout the area



↑ The main road to Viñales



“Taking that first step out of the airport is when the realisation hits. The sound of 1950s cars and motorcycles roaring past is drowned out by locals arguing loudly in Spanish, only pausing for a gasp through their cigars”

kick a soccer ball around the streets, instead of virtually on their iPads. The town was full of artists and ancient bars, as well as fewer beggars and spruikers, a refreshing change from Havana. The Cuban gods blessed me with an aftermarket S&S pipe on the Fat Boy which helped to disperse the thick crowds. Unfortunately for him, Fossil was tasked with a V-Rod which sounded like a sewing machine and sported pegs designed for gymnasts. Once parked, money was given to supposed parking attendants, then to locals guarding the parked vehicles, then

again if you wanted to visit the baño (toilet, a word I worked out quick-smart).

Cuba has two separate currencies for tourists and locals — pesos and convertible pesos, the latter being the tourists' dollar and worth approximately 25 times as much. With that in mind, it's understandable why these spruikers try every trick in the book. This arrangement also means a hotel bellboy can make up to three times more money than an engineer or doctor thanks to generous tips.

We spent an afternoon on the outskirts ►

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Enough said.

Entering our last stop, Varadero, we enjoyed dinner at a family restaurant run by Fidel Castro's old personal chef. Carlos had tried for years to bail him up for a chat, but he always seemed to be busy, a recurring trend with any past or present government figure when topical questions were posed. The group's conversation swung to how we had almost made it the whole distance without an accident, until our French mate slid on an oil patch. No damage was done, but doing what Americans do best, our Yankee friend couldn't stop talking about it. Nothing vitriolic was said, but I'm assuming something was lost in translation as he almost wore his dinner.

The last thing I expected on the tour was an American, but to gain access, his visa ensured the authorities he was there to "teach English". The charter flight from Miami only took 45 minutes, something around 60,000 Americans a year do. With laws changing, estimates have predicted over two million will visit Cuba by 2016. Obviously a hot topic, word is that big US ►



↑ The Che Guevara memorial — the most celebrated Cuban identity who actually isn't Cuban

looking through caves, markets and other touristy activities. Much of the country's history was built around sugar cane and tobacco fields, along with the slaves who harvested them. A giant watchtower we climbed kept an eye on an entire valley of slaves until the cruel conditions were abolished in the late 1800s.

A lot of these products are hard to come by for locals, including fresh meat and vegetables outside of the rations given to families. A black market exists, but heavy jail sentences apply for those caught selling. Our guide spent a solid hour explaining why and how his friend is spending the next five years behind bars for selling illegal beef.



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businesses have already laid stakes for land. I can already picture scenes of drunken tourists bartering with local taxi drivers to export their '50s classic back to 'merica. The biggest worry would be seeing Cuba's charm replaced with Starbucks and pickup trucks.

The day had come and before checking out, we strategically placed our cigars to hopefully make it through customs smoothly. I've seen Border Patrol and wasn't keen to have my person searched after 22 hours of flying. The software running at Havana airport was just upgraded to Windows 95, so we gave plenty of leeway for queuing.

Getting off in Toronto for our stopover was like second nature, so after struggling all trip to get used to Cuban normalities, it was humorous watching the Cubans struggle to understand

the futuristic process. The majority don't own passports at all, but a lucky few will travel as a result of sporting programs or by obtaining an official invite via a friend living abroad. Even then, the maximum amount of travel time is three months.

A pair of athletes got off in front of us, pausing to take photos of the snow, giddy with excitement. Even the modern buildings that are plain to westerners amazed them, much like the architecture from last century in Havana did for us. It took me weeks to realise the photos I took are now a snapshot in time, all ready to be flipped on its head. I already look back on some and shake my head in disbelief.

Don't wait to do that holiday you've always talked about. Things can change in an instant. Maybe I'll be writing about another revolution in 50 years time. Any excuse to go back. **ARR**



↑ Even the weaponry is old American gear



↑ Come back to Cuba again? Sure, any excuse to get back there once more!



↑ Lunch in Cienfuegos at a local Paladar, basically someone's home that doubles as a restaurant

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BORDER TO BORDER

Anne and Ian embark on a 21-day, 3000km scenic tour
from Queensland to Victoria with plenty of time for riding, rest and rain





■ Just south of Killarney

STORY: IAN ROYALL

PHOTOS: ANNE-MIA KIERREN/

RED GEORGE MEDIA

The plan was simple enough — ride from Toowoomba to Melbourne, the scenic way. Hug the coast, soak up the sun, go inland for a bit and avoid the Pacific Highway as much as possible.

But that plan needed much planning before we could jump in the saddle. This was to be a point-to-point journey so our two bikes needed to be shipped to our starting point, which was Toowoomba. Since one bike was a daily ride and some gear was still needed before we left, it was a logistical exercise to determine what to send and what to keep and carry on the plane.

Full marks to Peter at Here And There Motorcycle Movers, who handled our rides with care and was very accommodating with our extra baggage. Everything was delivered safe and sound to Toowoomba in good time for our arrival a week or so later.

When we got to Toowoomba, we gave ourselves a full day to rest, organise our gear and check the bikes. Then pack, re-pack and re-pack again. My Brisbane-based brother was joining us for the first couple of days so our starting line-up was a 2007 Triumph Street Triple, 1988 Honda GB400

and a 2011 Ducati Monster 696. Departing from our parents' home, I'm pretty sure our mother was shaking her head thinking, "Haven't you boys grown up yet?" Sorry mum.

Day one was a Saturday morning cruise down through the Southern Downs, mostly with horse floats for company. It must have been gymkhana day. Turning left at Warwick, it was then across the plains to Killarney, which is tucked into the edge of the Great Dividing Range. A crisp sunny

"The next hour or so was a mix of potholes, ridges and even stretches of gravel. I fully expected my rims to be corrugated by the end."



▲ On the ferry crossing the Clarence River at Maclean

morning and a sweet warm-up. Yep, this is why we ride. Well, one of the many reasons. The border is a few kilometres south of Killarney and then it's left at Legume on to the Summerland Way bound for Woodenbong.

A sign suggesting we adjust our speed according to the conditions got our attention and was literally a sign of bumps to come. The next hour or so was a mix of potholes, ridges and even stretches of gravel. I fully expected my rims to be corrugated by the end. The rolling hills were utterly stunning but I was t-t-too b-b-busy b-b-bouncing around to notice properly. At the end, my rims were still round but a laptop screen didn't fare so well.

It was a relief to my spine to roll into Woodenbong, even if a few hundred bikers had beaten us to it. It was the day of the Good As Gold Ride so we were outnumbered by American twins, lots of chrome and black t-shirts. Realising that the accompanying police were not interested in our non-cruisers, we rode on and relished the best stretch of our day — a 45-minute blast south to



↑ Into NSW Woodenbong bound



↑ Beachfront at Brooms Head



↑ Riding into Seal Rocks Beach

Kyogle for food and coffee at Espresso Edge, which kindly kept the kitchen open. Two thumbs up!

The heat and the bumpy roads had taken their toll so the ride through Lismore and down to Lennox Head was more functional than recreational. Byron Bay was the next stop and hitting a traffic jam before the town centre made us wonder whether dropping in on a late summer's Sunday was such a good idea after all. Byron was a carnival of chaos with beautiful people, plastic people, a nude bicycle event, drug deals on the waterfront, drunks and families. A typical Byron weekend.

The next morning and then there were just two bikes left as my brother swapped his Kevlar for boardshorts at Lennox. A late start out of Ballina meant travelling in the heat of the day. Boardies now looked a smart choice. We then wound our way through the canefields on the plains south of Lismore. It felt like we were in North Queensland. It was certainly hot and humid enough.

A few wrong turns and a missed turn-off later found us on our way to Casino, where we peeled off gear and grabbed cold drinks. There was great food and warm smiles from the team at Zeebras.

Heading south on the Summerland Way, we veered left to Lawrence — an unexpectedly great ride — and on to the ferry to cross the Clarence River. That's about when the fun began. Dark grey clouds loomed low as we crossed to the other side of the river and dashed to Maclean for a quick pit stop, aiming for Brooms Head on the coast.

Still the clouds menaced and the rain radar showed patches of red and dark red. Whatever the opposite of storm chasers is, that was us. It was weirdly exhilarating outrunning the rain and by the time we reached Brooms Head Caravan Park the adrenaline was pumping. We were greeted by quite a contrast. The manager was so chilled and probably wondered what these two hyped-up bikers were on. Brooms Head was such a serene, beautiful beach retreat that an extra night was in order. ►



↑ Exploring the coastline around Coffs Harbour

LONG TRIPS: 10 THINGS WE LEARN'T

1. Take moisture-wicking gear if you have it. It draws moisture (sweat) on hot days and dries quickly when you wash it.
2. Take a charging station for your phones, iPods, iPads.
3. Take a riding course before heading off. It'll hone your skills and confidence, particularly if you've brought a new-to-you bike.
4. Limit your reading material. Books can be heavy and take up space, so opt for a Kindle or iPad.
5. Join caravan park loyalty programs. You get discounts, offers and sometimes free Wi-Fi.
6. Take a spare key. Stash it somewhere accessible, maybe even on another bike. Also throw a \$20 note in the same place for emergencies.
7. Early morning is the best time to ride. Maybe cruise out for 50km or so, then stop for breakfast and a cuppa.
8. Allow for extra days. If you find somewhere nice, stop. If it rains, stop. Rest up and you'll be revived and enjoy it more when you do jump back on the bike.
9. Send stuff home. Inevitably you'll find you have too much of something (maybe those seven black t-shirts was overdoing it ...). Pack an empty pre-paid post bag, bundle up what's not needed and post it home. It'll lighten your load and make the morning pack easier.
10. Magic Mat. A re-useable non-stick sheet for barbecues.



■ After riding, it's time to eat



■ Boots off, coffee time

The morning after was a spurt down the crazy-busy Pacific Highway, which reminded us why we wanted to avoid the madness of the A1. From Grafton we did just that, taking the much quieter Orara Way down to Glenreagh and into the back of Coffs Harbour, camping for the night at Sawtell Beach.

Another beautiful beach was followed by good coffee and breakfast at Split Espresso on the main street, where we ran into Tex and Bundy — the man and his dog

who have done something like 750,000km together. Mind-blowing.

The following morning we went west, swinging onto the Waterfall Way and heading to Armidale. It was the best day of riding so far, with clear skies, lush rolling hills and a (mostly) good road. Even the quarry trucks didn't cause too much grief as we climbed the Great Dividing Range. We made the obligatory stop in Dorrig at Juan's Cafe and his self-proclaimed "world's smallest motorcycle museum". Then it was ►



■ Trike in Buladelah



■ The GB400 crossing the Sydney Harbour Bridge



■ Under the guts of central Sydney



■ Sea Cliff Bridge south of Sydney



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QUEENSLAND TO VICTORIA

west again across the ridge to Armidale. A great, albeit tiring, day and we were relieved to find a great food joint in town called the Gold Fish Cafe.

The following morning we pierced through the mist, southbound again, through Uralla and then picked up Thunderbolts Way from Walcha. This was the most challenging day of riding. What started clear and promising was soon beset by rain, variable road surfaces, roadworks, gravel traps and everything from rockfalls to big dead wombats.

The rain denied us the enjoyment of the road and scenery as we nursed our bikes and bones into Gloucester and found the best Italian pizza for miles. The coast was our goal so we donned the wets again and took our time across to Hallidays Point, south of Taree and digs at Red Head Beach. Time for a day of beach and drying out.

Early morning is the best time to ride. You're fresh, the morning light calms the soul and traffic is usually light. So it was as we resumed after a beach day and headed south down the Lakes Way — a



■ Ready to ride



■ Rest day is washing day



↑ Thumbs up, we're good to go



■ The dog

beautiful ride into Tuncurry, catching a glimpse of the paddle-boarders as we crossed into Forster.

Still hugging the coast, we discovered more picture-postcard beaches — Elizabeth Beach and Seal Rocks to name a few that will be definite stopping points for later adventures. But for now, we had a date to keep in Sydney so we pushed on, despite the lure of crystal waters and white sand.

A crisp morning of easy riding along the Lakes Way ended with refreshment in Bulahdelah, which lived up to its reputation as a bikers' meeting point. The BMW riders were less than chatty but the Harley boys are always keen to engage, especially when it comes to having their photo taken. Smile!

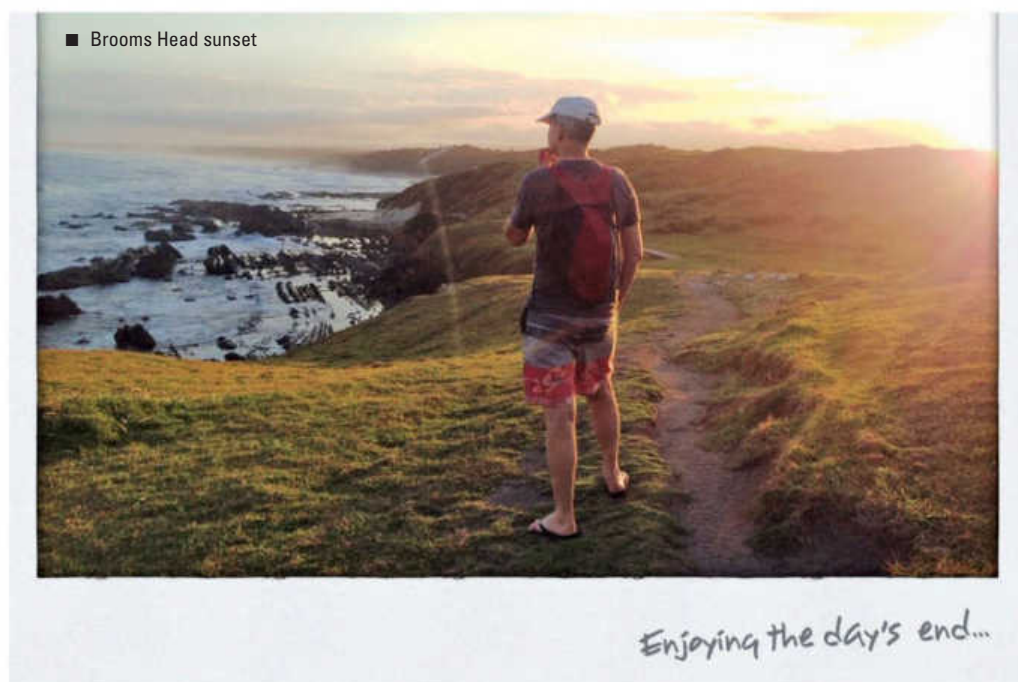
Then the storm came out of nowhere. Just as we were filling up, the hail started coming down. We took shelter under the Shell roof, waited for it to pass, then headed down the Pacific Highway, hoping to make Port Stephens before the next band of rain. No such luck as wind and hail slapped us head-on, forcing us to pull into One Mile Beach for another day of beach and drying out. It had become a nice pattern. Ride one, beach one. A bloke could get used to this.

A day later and as we were heading into Newcastle, one became aware of two things: speed limits are seemingly optional for the locals, and traffic lights are in vogue. We dodged the Pacific Highway which meant a slow, stuttering ride through into Gosford, where we thought we'd stop for a cuppa but got caught in the CBD where there was no parking and no way out, thanks to "No Right Turns" on every corner.

It was a relief to hit the freeway again, open up the bikes to 110km/h and into the big smoke, arriving at Sydney Lakeside Caravan Park at Narrabeen for a couple of nights. Great, affordable place with a grouse beach, surf and all.

Our full day in Sydney entailed a morning of campervan shopping (a vehicle plus bike trailer to stop longer at some of the aforementioned great spots) and an afternoon on the beach, watching the surfers until dark.

Packed and loaded again, a chat over breakfast ►



■ Brooms Head sunset

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**If only he'd packed the
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Bairnsdale... Time to replace the tube

with a cafe racer type at Dee Why was followed by our exit through Sydney, until I managed to get us creatively and hilariously lost in the city. Well, it wasn't funny at the time but we managed to slip past Glebe fish markets, detour through a construction site at Darling Harbour and eventually stopped for help behind Circular Quay.

A local cabbie gave us great directions — far more helpful than the signage across the bridge. I think if you want to go south, you have to follow the signs east first. Maybe, I still don't know.

Anyway, it was a sticky hot day — should have been a beach day, especially while stopping at Cronulla Beach for coffee. The beach and water looked so tempting. The cafe had a vintage Vespa at the front and it turned out the owner (of cafe

and scooter) was a former Melburnian who used to run clubs there in the 1980s. Ah, the '80s.

Refreshed, we took the well-worn motorcycle route through the Royal National Park and then ticked off the Sea Cliff Bridge as one the bucket-list roads to ride. Shoalhaven Heads, east of Nowra, was the next stop for a break, waiting a couple of days to link up with the Black Dog Ride for the South Coast. (Caffeine sidenote: We found the best coffee between Sydney and Melbourne at a joint called Hyper Hyper in Nowra. It's so cool it doesn't even have a sign up saying its name. Hipsters, they're everywhere.)

Suitably caffeinated, we joined more than 200 bikes for the 120km BDR ride down to Batemans Bay. A lot of fun, great bikes, good people and one mighty important cause. Harleys outnumbered all other bikes on the day and it was almost a relief not to have that deep twin rumble in my ears as we left the party and headed to Broulee Beach just 15km further south.

A day in the sun and a day in the rain at Broulee and it was time to think about home. But first the Honda's rear tyre had lost air, although we managed to get enough in to get going and head to Bodalla Motorcycles for a tyre and chain check.

Time was pressing so we missed one of our favourite rides — Bermagui to Tathra — and lunched in Bega by the river to plan the afternoon's ride over the hills back into Victoria.

Did I mention why we ride before? The ascent up Brown Mountain provided another one of those truly sweet moments. When we were barrelling along over a ridge, an eagle flew parallel to us for some time. Once we were up the big hill,

it was over to Bombala, and what a pleasure to ride into a motorcycle-friendly town. There were plenty of other riders about, some coming, some going, some staying.

The destination for the night was Orbost and while most bikers take the Delegate Road, also known as the Road of a Thousand Bends, we shied away from the gravel sections. Instead we stayed on the Monaro Highway and had a great blast across the plains and down into Cann River.

By morning the leak had returned to the Honda's rear tyre. We pumped it up, only for it to get even worse. We nursed it to Orbost Tyre Service, but they don't repair motorcycle tyres. Or so we thought. Experienced hand Jack emerged from the back declaring that the Honda GB400 could be fixed because it "was just a farm bike". True, it's from the same pedigree as the XR/XL family, but we never thought of this urban beauty in such dismissive terms.

Jack worked his magic, patched the tube and we were on the road before 10am and into Bairnsdale an hour later. But the tyre was dying again. We had enough air to get around the corner to Doyle and Shields, who found another hole (yes, a different one so Jack's work held true) in the tube, which was promptly replaced. Home beckoned and we skipped through Gippsland, with a stop in Moe, only to hit heavy rain on Melbourne's outskirts but fittingly the heavens cleared enough in the city for us to deliver a celebratory fist-pump as we soared over the Bolte Bridge.

It was quite a ride: three states, 21 days, 3122km, seven beaches, three magnificent motorcycles and one helluva experience. **ARR**



■ The NSW-Vic border heading south on the Monaro Hwy



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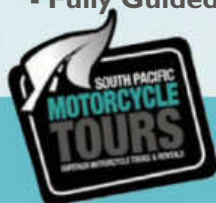
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BACKROADS HUNTER

The Hunter Valley has more great riding roads than it does world-class vineyards

**STORY MICK MATHESON
PHOTOS ANNE BAKER AND MM**

For all the joy of a ride up the Putty Road or the pleasures of the wineries, I reckon no ride in the Hunter Valley starts until I have the Hunter River behind me. North of this old waterway, away from the new freeway that cuts quickly across the land, there is a network of little roads that will entertain anyone who seeks unbeaten tracks. Although I say unbeaten, some of these tracks are rather beaten up, but what's a good ride in the country if you don't hit a few bumps, potholes and patches? This is a ride that'll keep you on your toes but it's scenic, twisty, hilly and fun all the way.

This area has been a favourite place for me to ride since I lived in Armidale in the 1980s, when I'd make regular trips to Sydney via some of the roads between the New England and Pacific highways. When I began testing bikes in the 1990s, I went back there and explored more roads that were ideal for revealing what a bike was good for. On a good day I would head out after breakfast, riding north on the Putty Road or via Wollombi, loop up as far as Dungog, then eventually find my way to onto Highway 1 for the comfort-testing drone home in time for dinner. A few pics, notes and coffees on the way made the day a full but fabulous one.

Singleton is the jump-off point for this story's riding. It's not a bad place for a break if

you've made the trek up from Sydney, and if you're interested in military history you've got to have a look through the Infantry Museum. You leave Singleton on Queens Street, which becomes Gresford Road as soon as you cross the Hunter. The bridge here isn't very old, and you might remember when it was a rambling, roller-coasting old wooden thing that was hundreds of metres long and so narrow it needed a passing turnout halfway across. Often I head straight out on Gresford Road a few kays to a T-junction, but last time I turned right as soon as I got off the bridge, onto Glendon Road. This is a very pretty little detour with some long views over the Hunter. It's only a few minutes till you turn left onto Elderslie Road, which hooks through ►



↑ Relaxing by the Manning River at Wingham

a few nice bends before coming into the aforementioned T-junction from the south.

At that point you're on Glendonbrook Road. It's one of those really neat roads that rarely straightens up but isn't a full-on scratcher's road, either. Your pace gets interrupted by a rough spot or tighter corners, but generally you can enjoy a good flow even though not one corner seems to resemble any other. One day I'll work out how the locality of Cranky Corner got its name.

Take it easy over the wooden bridge a bit further on, which is single lane and has a "give way" sign at this end. You're away from the Hunter River now, crossing Webbers Creek, which runs through a deep V. There

are some great corners coming up now — real road rider's bends that go over crests, are sometimes blind and can be rough but feel fantastic when you get them right. On the higher parts of Glendonbrook Road the views are beautiful. Hit this area in the late afternoon and the steep hillsides glow in the deep sunlight.

Enter East Gresford and turn right at the intersection. You can go straight ahead, up towards Lostock Dam with its little caravan park that's good to stay in during the hot months; adventure riders can go all the way through here on the gnarly little tarred road until it becomes gravel and disappears up into the Barringtons — there's awesome riding up

there. But we'll go right and then, a couple of kays later when we roll through Gresford, turn left at the T-junction. Or don't turn left but go to the pub for lunch. Whatever you choose, our next leg takes us east towards Dungog.

Again, the road's a hoot and in all kinds of condition, from smooth and new to old and horrible. But at least it's all sealed. A minute or two out of Gresford, be ready to swing left at a Y-junction where you'll be turning across oncoming traffic at a crest — don't rush it! Over the next hill the road plunges down and winds up the next hill in one of those scenes that will give any rider a rush of expectation.

Not long after there's a series of hairpins and tighter bends as you climb a very steep



↑ Morning mist still hangs in the valleys. It can get chilly in the Hunter



"Over the next hill the road plunges down and winds up the next hill in one of those scenes that will give any rider a rush of expectation."

hillside. They should put a lookout up near the top, so sweet is the view, but instead the trees block anything more than a glimpse. The descent on the other side almost makes up for it. Again, afternoon sun and big hills make it particularly special.

There's a 90-degree turn when you bump into Sugarloaf Creek, followed just afterwards by a "give way" sign where you chuck a right and cruise into Dungog. I like this town. Its wide streets hint at its heyday in another era, and there are even a couple of bowsters right on the footpath in truly old style. There are great cafes and pubs for a meal or snack. The town was hit by a savage flash flood about a year ago, which claimed a life and a number of houses.

On old mate of mine, Neale Curry, lives here. I first met him on a BMW Safari when he was working with his family's bike dealership — a few of you will remember him. He's now working in the workshop just down the road from the clock tower in Dungog, and last time I was there he showed me footage of the floodwaters rushing through the shop! The house next door was shifted off its foundations and others further downhill were swept away. Most of the mess and damage has been cleaned up now, but if you look around you'll still see signs of it. Frightening stuff. If you happened to notice the old grey Ferguson tractor mounted on a pole as you came into ►

OTHER RIPPING ROADS

Instead of going to Singleton, you can cross the Hunter River at Maitland and you'll ride north on a very enjoyable road that takes you up through the historic village of Paterson, always a popular destination for riders on a weekend. Keep tracking north and you'll reach East Gresford, linking up with the main route in this story. From Maitland or Raymond Terrace you can ride out through Seaham, then Clarence Town and on to Dungog. There's also a link road joining the above roads, via Martins Creek. I've not ridden it, though. If you get just as much enjoyment — or more — when the tar runs out, you won't go wrong exploring the state forests and national parks around Barrington Tops. That's wild country — steep, high enough for snow and thickly forested. I'm sure you can imagine the kind of tracks and fire trails that go with it.



↑ Coming off the old bridge over Webbers Creek, where there are some good corners



↑ Typical Upper Hunter country — perfect if you love meandering roads

NORTHERN HUNTER VALLEY, NSW

town, ponder this: it was under water when the flood ripped through.

If you're doing a day ride from Sydney, this is one place where logic dictates you turn for home. My advice is to cruise south through Clarence Town, yet another neat ride. However, our ride goes down the hill past the devastated area and out on Stroud Hill Road. Be ready for even more great, varied roads. A few sets of challenging corners will put a grin on your face, though when you're coming uphill on a shaded, narrow and somewhat bumpy section, beware of a damp surface on at least one of the right-handers. That corner's bumpier than most, too. That can be a trap, so watch out for it.

When the road seems to straighten up again and your speed rises, you might do what I do three out of four times I ride here: you'll miss the turnoff we're going to take, seeing the "Stroud Road" sign as you flash past it. Jam on the brakes and go back. It's only a shortcut so it's not a big deal if you don't, but it adds interest by throwing in some slow corners and a couple of low causeway crossings under canopies of scrub.

At Stroud Road you join the famous Bucketts Way. We want to turn left here (unless you're now ready to go back to Sydney) and aim for Gloucester. However, down to the right there's a little general store which welcomes Ulysses members who are

ready for a bite or drink. It has 91 octane fuel, but not premium.

Bucketts Way sets out from here by climbing a bushy hill before dropping into lower country to cross a creek, and it repeats this pattern a few times on its way to Stratford, which is on the Avon River. You can tell this place was established by homesick English settlers in the early 1800s. The road becomes more open as it rises and falls over rolling hills on the way into Gloucester, which has ample places for fuel, food, drinks and accommodation. Last time I stopped here was for lunch, and I parked the R1200RT touring bike over the road from a Monster and very cool KTM motard-cum-cafe racer V-twin. A trio of dusty adventure bikes pulled in and parked alongside the RT too. To me, it summed up the universal appeal of the northern Hunter as a riding destination. All kind of bikes can find all sorts of pleasures riding here. There's something for everyone, ►

“There are some great corners coming up now — real road rider's bends that go over crests, are sometimes blind and can be rough but feel fantastic when you get them right.”



↑ Take a few minutes to admire the view from the lookout east of Gloucester



↑ The railway here is in regular use. This is the level crossing in Dungog

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↑ These Hunter roads are good for any kind of bike. There are lots of dusty options, too

no matter what you ride.

Gloucester is the bottom end of Thunderbolt's Way, an awesome ride, but this time we'll continue along Bucketts Way on a ride that will eventually bring us into the back of Taree. After all you've ridden so far, the roads out through Krambach and Wingham will seem familiar, though I reckon there's a bit less scenery to enjoy now. It's still fun with a few corners and crests that will grab your attention. Rather than deal with Taree's crowds — it's now a busy and sprawling town — stop for a break at Wingham, where you can grab some takeaway food and head down to the Manning River to eat it in peace.

The reason I took you out this way to the Pacific Highway is because from there it's a relatively short drone up this boring route to Wauchope and the awesome Oxley Highway. Ride that road to Walcha then take Thunderbolt's Way back to Gloucester and you've completed one of the best loops in the

country. I previously stayed in Wauchope when doing this ride but last time, with Anne on the pillion seat, we decided to treat ourselves to a beachfront overnighter in Port Macquarie, where I can recommend South Pacific Apartments as a relaxing home away from home.

Back down in the Hunter Valley, I've stayed in many places over the years: B&Bs, farm stays, pubs, motels, and even a couple of the resorts like Riverwood Downs. I've never been disappointed — just as I've never been disappointed by the riding all around the region. I've ridden it on sportsbikes, naked, cruisers, sports-tourers, tourers and adventurers, and always found a pace and a mindset that matched me, the bike and the route. There are still a few roads, especially the unsealed ones, that I haven't yet been on, but I keep having so much fun on the ones I know that I'm not being pulled to the new ones. It's a special region to ride, and one to put on your must-do list. **ARR**

“I’ve ridden it on sportsbikes, naked, cruisers, sports-tourers, tourers and adventurers, and always found a pace and a mindset that matched me, the bike and the route.”





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NUMBERS OF FACT

We number crunch to find the most interesting and somewhat unbelievable figures associated with motorcycles



\$1,770,000

The eye-watering amount the world's most expensive motorcycle sold for at auction

Known by bike nuts and movies buffs as the Captain America chopper, the Stars-and-Stripes-clad Harley-Davidson ridden by Peter Fonda in classic road movie *Easy Rider* is arguably the world's most famous and instantly recognisable bike.

In actual fact, there were two Captain America choppers. The bike sold at auction last year was reportedly the one used in a crash scene at the end of the film. Some Hollywood memorabilia experts claimed the bike wasn't the real deal. If it wasn't, that's one hell of a con. If it was, which a lot of other experts believe it was, then this is a bike that's staked itself in the history books for all the right reasons.

500,000

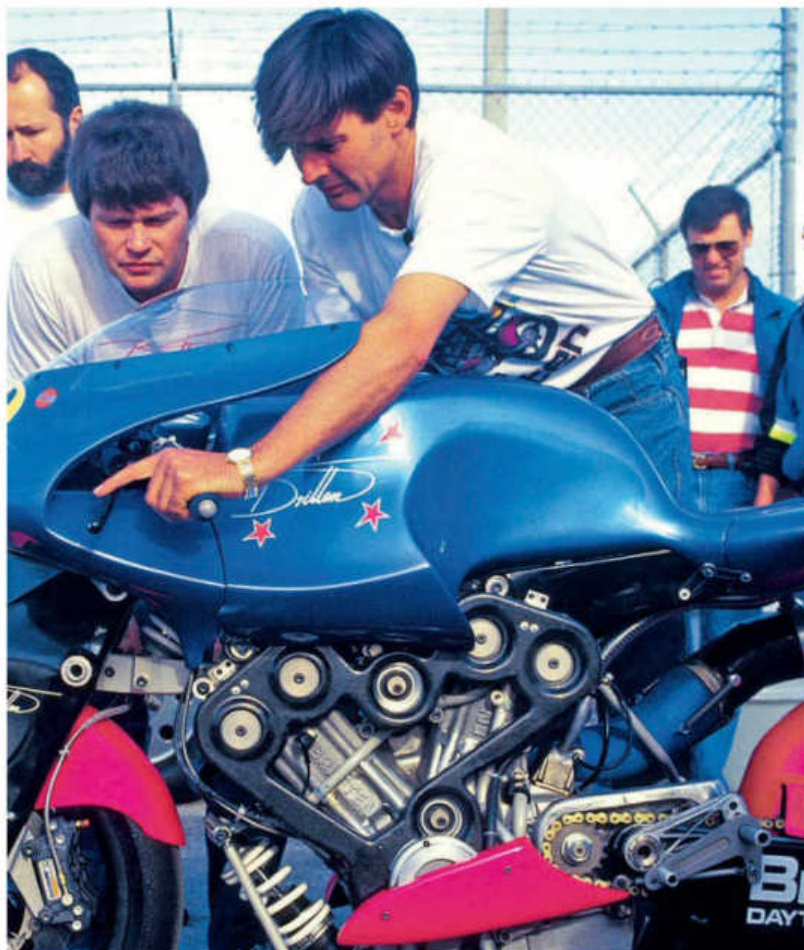
BMW GS models that have rolled off the German production lines

In 2014, the 500,000th example of a flat-twin GS was wheeled out of BMW's factory. The model was born as the R80 G/S in 1980 that punched out 37kW — a very respectable digit for those days. In the 35 years since then, the world's most adored adventure bike was moulded, reshaped and engineered to appear in various guises.

Today development has led to the R1200GS that offers 93kW and technology such as anti-lock brakes, traction control and semi-active suspension. This was all ground-breaking stuff when first added. Let your mind wander to where the GS will be in another 35 years and the future of adventure riding will be very, very exciting.



↑ Half a million down and they keep on coming!



↑ The master and machine

10

The number of Britten V1000 models in existence

In 1991, New Zealand petrolhead and bike nut, John Britten, set about building a superbike in his garage. In many ways, it was a story akin to the garden-shed origins of Harley-Davidson. However, unlike the iconic all-American brand which now boasts a global monopoly, Britten's efforts remained a much smaller operation until his death in 1995.

Britten designed and built the carbon-fibre V1000 models from the engine up. The bike had a water-cooled 999cc, 60-degree V-twin. Many reports cite Britten as a genius. His use of titanium, composite materials and pioneering engineering helped make the Britten V1000 one of the greatest motorcycles of all time.

The V1000 went on to win the New Zealand Grand Prix along with the Battle of the Twins at Daytona, setting a number of world speed records along the way. These feats cemented Britten's name in motorcycling history but the bike itself also was lauded with praise.

Adding to the fairy tale is the fact that only 10 Britten V1000 models were ever made. As such they're not only one of the most brilliant motorcycles in history, but also one of the rarest.

90,000

The number of bikes produced by Harley-Davidson to supply demand during WWII

Harley-Davidson began production of its now famous WLA model in small numbers as part of a general military expansion in 1940. As the US entered the war, the Milwaukee factory stepped up production. By 1945 an estimated 90,000 militarised models had rolled off the production lines to aid the war effort. The 45-cubic-inch (740cc) WLA and some variants were produced and supplied to the Allies, including the Canadian army and military forces in the UK and South Africa.



↑ There might have been 90,000 militarised models, but you'd be hard pressed finding one!



550cc

The engine capacity of the Triumph Model H — the godfather of all modern motorcycles

Introduced in 1915, the Triumph Model H — the first Triumph without pedals — is regarded by many as the first “modern motorcycle”. Featuring a 550cc side-valve four-stroke engine with a three-speed gearbox and belt transmission, the Model H represented the future of two-wheeled motoring.

Down the line, the Model H would evolve into the Triumph Tiger — one of the greatest of all post-war bikes. The Triumph Bonneville can also claim lineage from the Model H, further confirming the Model H's illustrious legacy.

↑ The Model H was another significant wartime motorcycle

122

Grand Prix wins by Giacomo Agostini

Motor racing icon Giacomo Agostini stood on the top step of the podium a record-breaking 122 times. His sparkling Grand Prix career saw him win a staggering 15 World Championships.

One of the greatest motorcycle racers of all time, Ago's first success came when he won the 1963 Italian 175cc championship with Morini. Just five years later, the young Italian from Lombardy won his first World Championship, riding for MV Agusta. This racing partnership would go on to become one of the greatest of all time.

Of his 122 victories, 68 came in the 500cc class where he won eight championship titles. The rest were all in the 350cc class. His last race was in 1977 at the British GP, two years after his last World Championship.



↑ Ago: he had it all



↑ Bernardi's machines acknowledged as firsts

1882

The year that a petrol-fuelled internal combustion engine was added to a cycle frame, creating the first ever motorcycle

1882 was the year that two new machines, both featuring petrol engines and different to anything seen before, were assembled. Both of these would go on to be considered as the precursor to all modern day motorcycles, despite each sporting three wheels.

The first was designed by engineering pioneer, Enrico Zeno Bernardi. The Italian fitted a Motrice Pia combustion engine, initially created to drive a sewing machine, to his son's tricycle. The first petrol fuelled motorised personal transport machine was created.

The other was designed by British inventor Edward Butler in that same year. The Butler Petrol Cycle also featured an internal combustion engine but, in a global first, Butler fitted it to a specially made frame. The concept was exhibited in London in 1884, preceding Karl Benz's "horseless carriage" — otherwise known as the Motorwagen — to stake its claim to be the world's first automobile..



75

The number of Grand Prix motorcycle World Championships won by Italians

Combining all championship wins up to 2014 including 15 from Giacomo Agostini and nine from Valentino Rossi, Italians have 31 more titles than the next best nations. Britain and Spain's riders have each clocked up 44 combined. It's an amazing feat and one that should be applauded, given just how dominant that number proves.

Australia currently sits at a commendable sixth place in the rankings with 11 championships in total — eight of which have come in the MotoGP/500cc class. In case you need reminding, Mick Doohan tops the Aussie list with five championships for himself.

\$649,920

The amount you'll need to own a Brough Superior SS100 "Alpine Grand Sports"

The last 1929 Brough Superior SS100 "Alpine Grand Sports" to publicly go on sale sold for a staggering GBPE315,100 (\$649,920). Named after the famous Alpine Trial, one of the toughest pre-war motorcycle racing events in the world, the 986cc SS100 Alpine Grand Sports had a name to live up to. The legendary George Brough himself

participated in the trial in 1925 on an SS100. He won six trophies, including one for Best Performance before the model went on sale to the public a few months later. Featuring a lower compression ratio, a small fly-screen and a pair of tool boxes as standard, the Brough Superior SS100 was equally adept at road riding as it was at racing.



↑ The greatest of George Brough's legendary motorcycles

672km/h

The claimed top speed of hyper motorbike, the Dodge Tomahawk

In 2002, US automotive giant Chrysler unveiled the Dodge Tomahawk. A limited-production, futuristic-concept motorcycle, it was to use a 10 cylinder 90-degree V-type engine out of a Viper supercar.

Amid a flurry of media coverage, Dodge initially claimed the bike could reach a whopping 420mph (672km/h). Later it was revealed this was based on rough calculations, rather than actual testing.

Dodge revised the claim to 300mph (480km/h), which, given the bike has that much fire in its belly, could be feasible. However, full testing has never been permitted. Perhaps even more noteworthy is the claimed 500 horses that the Tomahawk punches out. If we choose to believe it, that in itself is a remarkable feat.



↑ Sadly the hype wasn't delivered



132.701mph

The current Isle of Man TT outright lap record set by road racing legend, John McGuinness

In June 2015, 43-year-old road racing legend, John McGuinness, rode a Honda CBR1000RR to reclaim the outright IoM TT lap record — 132.701mph (213.562km/h) over a course of more than 60km, sometimes just millimetres away from the lampposts, curbs, cows and spectators. This is the most infamous but legendary road racing circuit in the world.

Another interesting number is 36.21mph (57.94km/h) — the lap record set at the race by a twin-cylinder machine in 1907 when the race was first opened to motorcycles.

We've come a long way since then, but more than 100 years ago that was a ferocious average speed. It's highly commendable considering the technology and conditions those guys were dealing with!

↑ That's an average of 213.562km/h on a road circuit...



1,156,361

The total number of motorcycles and scooters sold in Australia over the last 10 years

The records show that since 2005, Australians have bought well in excess of one million motorcycles and scooters. While this number

will rise when the figures for 2015 are released, considering the size of our population that's a remarkable number. This figure puts us right up there as one of the most prolific riding countries, per capita, anywhere in the world.

More than 100,000 new two-wheeled machines have rolled onto Australian roads every year since 2005 so it would be fair to say the future of our favourite hobby is looking bright. Here's to the next million!

↑ With roads on backdrops like this, it's no wonder so many people are buying bikes!

TESTING, TESTING



PERFORATED PROTECTION

I don't wear leathers much on the road anymore. They're just too hot and I prefer the multi-functionality of good textile gear that can keep you warm and dry in winter and yet, with the removal of internal layers, allow you to stay cool in summer. Well, with the arrival of my new jacket in the shape of the Spyke Top Sport GT, that might change.

This is definitely a product aimed more at the warmer months than the cold ones, but given that summer in Sydney lasts for about three-quarters of the year, I expect to get

some serious wear out of the thing. Not only does this jacket have a very sporty cut, with its tight fit (particularly in the arms to help hold the armour in place) and high waist, but the 1mm cow hide is very well perforated and there's a proliferation of fabric stretch-panels in the arms and either side of the back. These combine to allow for excellent airflow into and out of the jacket to help keep you cool.

I wore it to the servo on a chilly night and felt like I was riding in a t-shirt there was so much air blasting through the jacket, and was thankful I didn't have further to go. However, once the mercury hits the high teens, this

jacket is easily warm enough to wear. With only a light top underneath and with its massive logos across the chest and arms, nobody will be in any doubt what make of jacket you're wearing.

It comes with CE-approved shoulder and elbow/forearm armour internally as well as flexible plastic shoulders on the outside. There's an internal pocket for the good-sized CE-Level 2 back protector, which is an optional extra.

There are two external zip pockets and a large, single internal pocket secured with Velcro. The wrists have a zip and push-stud closure, and there's a built-in internal zip at the back to enable it to be attached to suitable trousers. The neck, which I found to be unusually large given the fit of the rest of the jacket, is also secured by a push-stud and has a small fabric insert where it might rub on your chin or throat, to help make it more comfortable.

To help tailor the fit more precisely there are also two large and strong Velcro straps on either side of the waist. Despite the generally short cut of the jacket, the rear is longer than the front by a good few inches, helping prevent that annoying and somewhat dangerous gap between jacket and jeans when in a riding crouch.

The overall look and feel of the jacket is one of quality, with some nice detail design such as the chequered flag running down the back, and features many of Spyke's safety features including their reinforced thread and protective foam impact-absorbing panels. The leather and fabric are also water-resistant, but with the way the air whistles through the holes I doubt you'll stay dry for long. Good thing Spyke can also supply a waterproof liner for it. Cost from AussieMoto is \$659.99, which is about as cheap as you'll find them anywhere.

— NIGEL CROWLEY



SPYKE TOP SPORT GT LEATHER JACKET

Prices: \$659.99

Sizes: Euro 46–60 (UK 36–50)

Colours: Black/White/Red, Black/White, Black, Red, White

Info: aussiemotogear.com, (02) 6280 8133

“The overall look and feel of the jacket is one of quality, with some nice detail design such as the chequered flag running down the back, and features many of Spyke's safety features including their reinforced thread and protective foam impact-absorbing panels”

SHED SPACE SAVER

The Australian-designed and Australian-owned Murphy Moto-Skate is ideal if you've got limited space in your shed or if you have to turn your bike around in order to ride out of an awkward or sloping driveway. However, I've also discovered it's great in a big shed or workshop because no matter what space your bike is in, the skate makes moving a bike so much easier.

The Moto-Skate is a heavy-duty steel platform on castors, three of which can be locked to prevent movement. You ride the bike onto it so the back wheel is on the main platform, then you kick down the side stand onto its little platform on the skate's arm. Only the bike's front wheel stays on the ground. You now push or pull the back end sideways on the castors, even spinning the bike 360 degrees around its front wheel. You can, of course, also move the bike forward and backwards, and when you get used to it you can move in multiple directions at once. Steer the bike from the front or back. If you need it, the bike's front brake will stop and hold it.

It's great for getting the bike exactly where you want it or turning it in a confined space. If you have to park your bike against a wall, alongside a car or other bike, you'll find it simple to get it in and out — and a hell of a lot quicker than otherwise. Better use of space, less chance of damage, all in less time using less muscle power.

There are two things to be cautious about. On sloping ground, the castors will always want to roll downhill, so flat concrete is the



ideal environment for the Moto-Skate. And because the rear wheel and side stand are slightly elevated, the centre of gravity of your bike is shifted a little higher and forward so it's closer to the point of balance; get a feel for it and be careful when moving the bike to the right that you don't upset its balance.

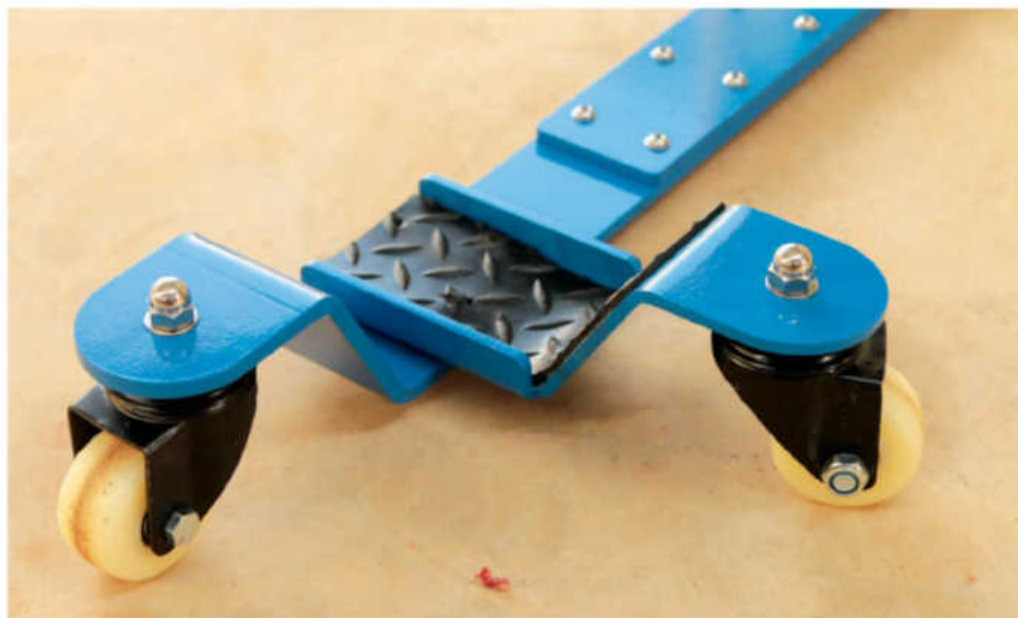
The Moto-Skate was designed by Murphy Metal Fabrications, an Australian company that clearly works to high standards of quality. The materials are robust, the castors large, the finish perfect. It has good features like the grip tape under the bike's rear wheel so it can't go anywhere. It'll be a long-lasting, low-maintenance tool.

Three sizes are available to suit every bike,

from a 125 up to the largest cruisers and tourers. The big one has a 450kg load capacity. I tested the Maxi size using the BMW R1200RT and a Victory Magnum, both of which fitted perfectly and were easy to move around. The best way to move the bikes was with relatively gentle effort so that I didn't get them off balance nor get them rolling with more momentum than I could pull up quickly. This way I could get them just about anywhere I wanted, even into a tiny corner beside my wife's car without restricting her access. As a solution to your space problems or just a convenience in the shed, the Murphy Moto-Skate could be exactly what you need.

— MICK MATHESON

“The Moto-Skate was designed by Murphy Metal Fabrications, an Australian company that clearly works to high standards of quality”



MURPHY MOTO-SKATE

Prices: Mini \$279, Mid \$299, Max \$320

Sizes: Mini, Mid, Max

Info: murphymoto-skate.com.au



TAKING CHARGE

Everything from your phone to your bike needs power, and this little device can power the lot. In this one little yellow box, which is about the size of a smartphone but twice as thick, there's enough grunt to jump-start your bike if the battery goes flat and enough capacity to recharge flat devices when you're away from a power point. The SJS Smart Charger will even power a tyre pump to re-inflate a flat after you've plugged it. It's very, very useful in this day and age.

I've had an SJS Smart Charger in my travelling toolkit for a few months and it has had more use than any other item in there. Mine's the SSC01 model, the smallest of the range and the one that's most appropriate for motorcyclists; it has the ability to jump-start any engine up to 4000cc, including high-compression bikes, and it's physically smaller

“The SJS comes in a bag that includes all the leads, plugs and other accessories you might need to charge a large collection of devices. It has USB ports dedicated for both Android and iPhone connections”

than the rest in the range so you can more easily pack it away in your kit.

The SJS comes in a bag that includes all the leads, plugs and other accessories you might need to charge a large collection of devices. It has USB ports dedicated for both Android and iPhone connections.

Yet another handy feature is the inbuilt

torch, which is a little LED light that draws very little power.

The SJS's power comes from the eight-amp Lithium polymer battery enclosed in the case. It's a high-quality advanced battery that does a better job than many of the lesser battery types out there in some similar products. If it's sitting idle, it'll maintain near full capacity for months, even years, without needing a top-up. With regular use, the time between its need for a boost varies, of course. I've used it mostly to charge my phone, but also some of the other tech I use, particularly Bluetooth helmets and cameras. Admittedly I have relied on the SJS to deal with a week of camping, but it has never run out of puff over a couple of days of charging duties.

I haven't yet had a chance to try the jump-start system, partly because I keep my bike's battery on a trickle-charger/battery conditioner — a CBE unit that I got at the same time, also through Kenma. For \$65, the CBE monitors and maintains a battery, extending its life as well as keeping it topped up, and it has a slower charge rate that better suits motorcycle batteries without damaging them. It replaced an old cheapie that I'd realised was not doing the job I expected of it.

The SJS Smart Charger is claimed to have a lifespan of 2000 recharging cycles, which will probably mean it'll see you through a number of phones before it needs replacing. In fact, its potential lifespan makes it look like great value compared with a lot of other electronics I use!

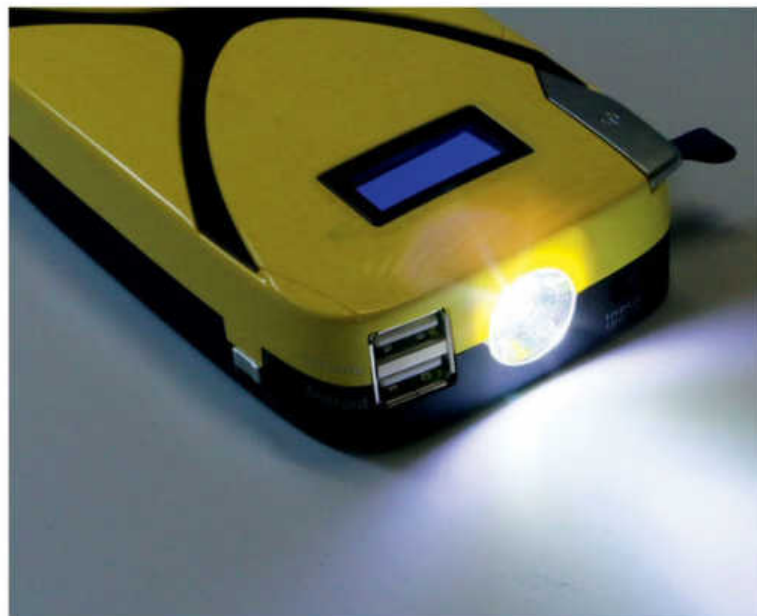
Oh, the tyre pump I mentioned above — there's an SJS one available that will work without any hiccups.

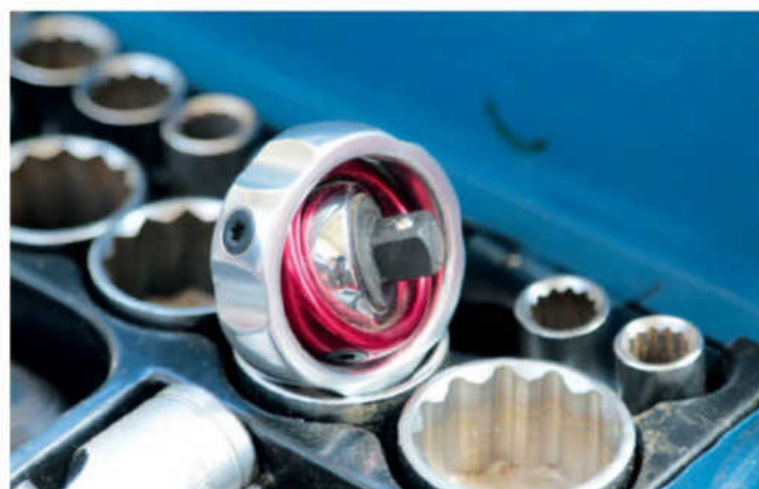
The SJS unit is a useful charger of electronics, a great backup in case your battery goes flat, and a potential saviour in other situations too. Perfect for the touring rider. — MM

SJS SMART CHARGER

Price: \$109.95

Info: shop.kenma.com.au, (02) 9484 0777





SPIN THIS, NOT SPANNERS

Any tool that makes life simpler in the workshop is a good thing. My socket set probably gets more use than anything else. All the extension bars, ratchets, adapters and other attachments come in handy at different times. Now there's one more thing I've added to the list: a GearWrench Drive Gimbal Ratchet.

Only a few days ago I was tightening up a bolt in a restricted space, unable to rotate it more than a click on the socket driver's ratchet because there wasn't room to swing the handle. It was like doing a 20-point turn — tedious in the extreme. Today I went and removed that bolt just for fun, then did it up again. Using this gimbal ratchet, it was easy.

It's simple. It's a knob that pivots. Just plug it into a socket or extension bar and turn it. The Drive Gimbal Ratchet lets you work in tighter spaces than the usual lever arms that stick out a mile. It also lets you put a lot more torque into your turns than when you try to use the socket itself with your fingers. And because it pivots, you can work in a different plane from the direction of the nuts or bolt you're turning, which, on motorcycles as well as other machinery, can make access a heap easier and the work a lot quicker.

“The concept is simple enough. Take your typical ratchet mechanism, complete with the ability to switch it from clockwise to anti-clockwise twist, and house it in another mechanism that pivots in two planes”

The concept is simple enough. Take your typical ratchet mechanism, complete with the ability to switch it from clockwise to anti-clockwise twist, and house it in another mechanism that pivots in two planes. The outer ring has indents for your fingers to grip, and the whole thing will also fit neatly into your palm so you apply a bit of downforce and get some extra strength into your turn.

The ratchet is a 72-tooth item so you can make small movements and still have some effect, though with the gimbal it's rare you are caught in a situation where you can't turn it a fair amount.

It has its limitations. You can't get as much torque into it as when you're pulling

on a long bar, and once a bolt is loose, the gimbal isn't as quick to turn as when you just spin the socket in your fingers, but as an addition to your toolset it can take a very useful place because of its versatility and ability to work in restrictive areas.

I've got a 3/8in drive on mine, which I think suits it well, and there's a 1/4in drive available too if you regularly use the larger size. The gimbal ratchet is small enough to be added to your onboard motorcycle tool kit without much trouble.

It's a US product and the quality shows. The finish is tough as well as attractive with its high polish and bright colour. The outer rings are aluminium, saving a bit of weight. The pivoting motion is smooth and natural, and the ratchet feels positive and strong. I think it'll last as long as I can use it. You can find them at many hardware and tool shops, such as Mitre-10, Masters and Total Tools. — MM

GEARWRENCH DRIVE GIMBAL RATCHET

Price: \$29.50

Sizes: 3/8in, 1/4in

Info: gearwrench.com.au

WHATZ NEW

SHOCKSTRAP

ShockStraps are a shock-absorbing tie-down that incorporates three tie-down principles into one system. It is quick and easy and has the reliability of a ratchet system and versatility of a shock cord.

When stretched, the strap maintains tension on the webbing, locking it into a buckle. ShockStrap stretches with road vibrations, acting like a shock absorber, and contracts with the load, keeping it secure.

Rated at 227kg, the 6ft (183cm) ShockStrap is recommended for securing your bike on your truck or trailer. If you need a longer ShockStrap there are 10ft (305cm) and 19ft (579cm) sizes.

The hooks and buckles are zinc coated and the hooks have wide openings to allow for more connection options.

Sizes: 6ft, 10ft and 19ft

Price: From \$US19.99

Visit: shockstrap.com

Email: sales@shockstrap.com.



CCCS CLIMAX HAND CONTROLS

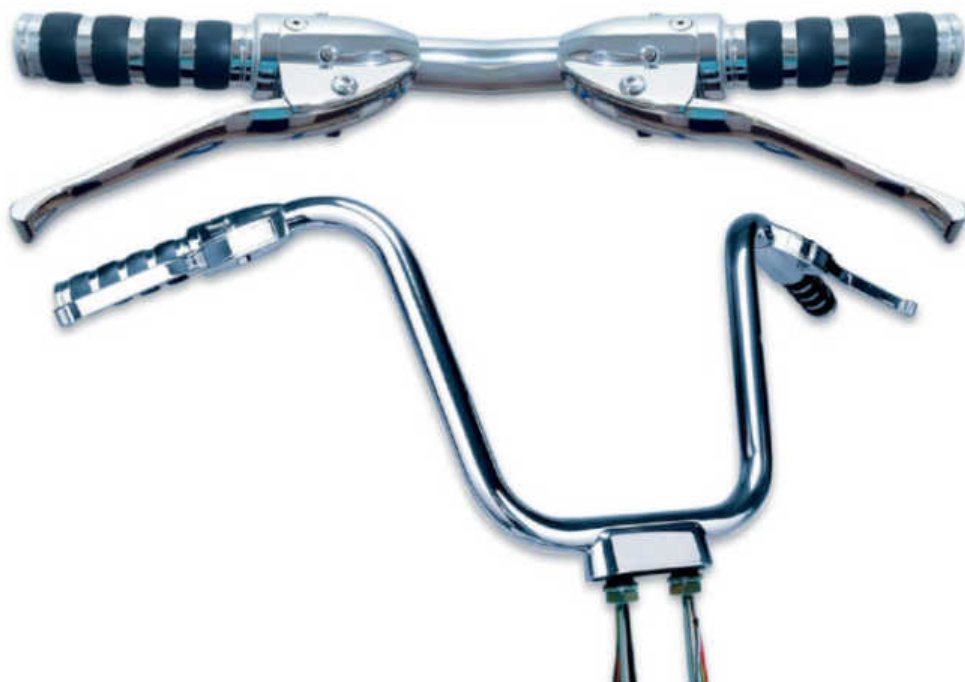
Custom Cycle Control Systems (CCCS) has released the Climax Hand Control system, a concealed handlebar system that hides all the lines, wires and cables through the bars. They exit below the top triple clamp.

There are five different handlebar styles ranging from old-school drag bars to ape hangers. All wires, cables and hoses come extra long so you can cut them to length, and the brake and clutch fluid reservoirs are also hidden. Reservoir filling and bleeding is done through an onboard funnel located inside the grip and seven micro switches can maintain stock control functions plus custom use. With multiple grip choices, an install kit that includes everything necessary to complete the job and in a chrome or black anodised finish, they are a great solution to a custom bike build.

Price: \$1899

Visit: customcyclecontrols.com

Email: info@customcyclecontrols.com





DUNLOP ROADSMART

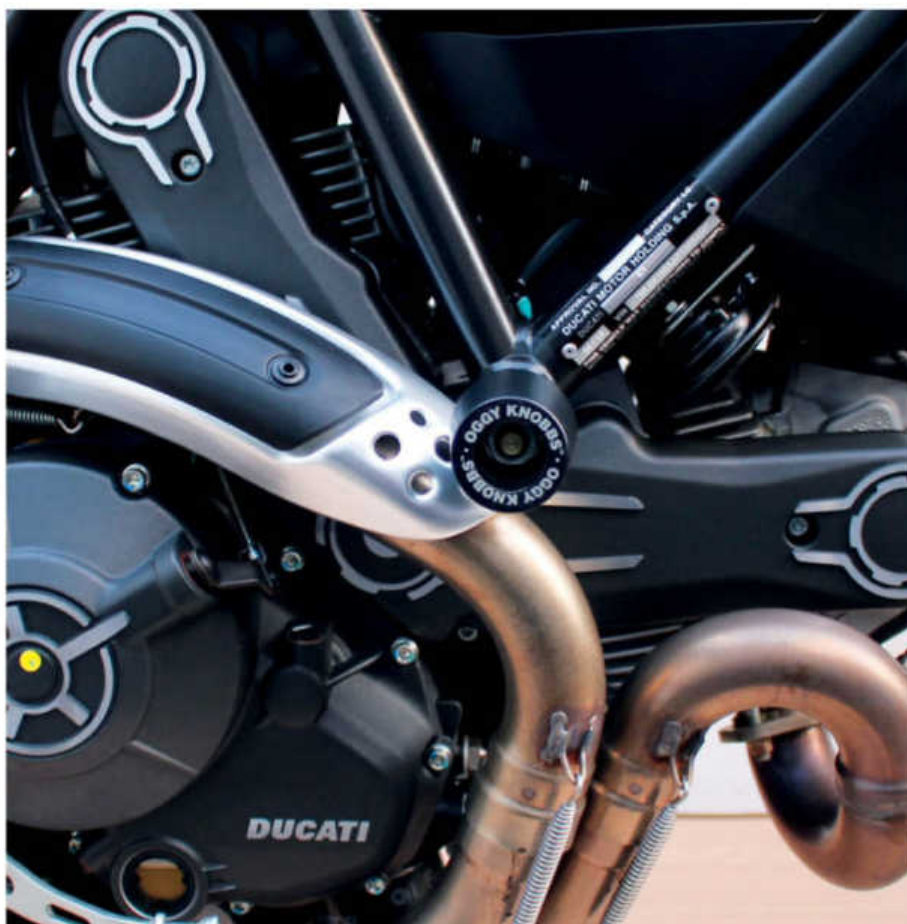
Dunlop has added the RoadSmart III sports-touring radial tyre to its extensive range of motorcycle tyres in Australia. The tyre is focused on meeting the needs of sport-touring riders, with high mileage, exceptional wet and dry grip and quick warm-up at low temperatures. High speed stability, rider feedback and comfort have also been improved in this latest evolution of the range.

The RoadSmart III is now available in sizes to suit most motorcycles and, best of all, at a retail price lower than ever before.

Price: From \$429.90 per set

From: All good bike shops

Visit: dunloptyres.com.au/tyres/motorcycle-tyres



DUCATI SCRAMBLER OGGY KNOBS

Promoto's Oggy Knobs are now available for the 2015 Ducati Scrambler. They take the brunt of impact and abrasion from the road and can save big dollars on bike repairs after a fall.

The aluminum components are made from aircraft-grade material, the bolts are high tensile, and the plastic slider is designed for the best combination of shock absorption, abrasion resistance and strength. The knobs are available in either black or white.

Prices: Black and white engine Oggys \$185

Front- or rear-axle Oggys \$99

Full protection kits which include all items: \$349

Visit: kenma.com.au

DUCATI MONSTER RAD GUARD

Rad Guard has guards for more than 350 different models and some of the company's latest products have been added to the Ducati Monster 821 and 1200 range. The guards are made from high-grade aluminium and are lightweight, strong, and have been designed with a robust frame to support your radiator core from side impacts. Easy to fit with written fitting instructions supplied, they can save you money and a big inconvenience. Best of all, the 821-1200 Monster guard has dropped \$39 to \$156!

Price: \$156

Visit: radguard.com.au

Phone: 02 6658 0060



DRI RIDER CLIMATE CONTROL EXO 2

DriRider's new Climate Control Exo 2 sports jacket is designed to be an extremely comfortable piece with a high level of flexibility that allows you to move around on the bike in any season. The outer shell is made from a high-tenacity mesh, polyester Oxford 600D and 1.1-1.2mm cowhide leather while it features armour in the shoulders, elbows and back. Triple- and double-stitched seams ensure a strong construction while a waterproof and breathable liner, thermo liner and a polymesh lining give it versatility in different conditions. There's reflective print and piping for night visibility and a waist connection zip for pants.

Sizes and colours: Black/Black XS-8XL

Black/White XS-6XL

Price: \$399.95

Visit: dri rider.com.au



LUGGAGE SYSTEM FOR STREET AND VINTAGE BIKES

The Legend Gear luggage line by SW-MOTECH combines a retro design with modern materials and versatile fastening system. The line of products includes robust soft luggage ranging from tank bags and saddlebags to tail bags that can double as a backpack. The bags are water-resistant, made from synthetic Napalon leather and waxed canvas. The inside of the bags is coated with polysynthetic leather and waterproof inner bags provide additional protection.

Depending on the model, the product line's tank bags come with strap or magnet fastenings and the saddlebags have either provided a model-specific carrier system or a universal holder. The tank bags have a capacity of 3L and 5.5L, and the saddlebags 20L–27L per set. Also available are various accessory bags and tail bags.

Visit: www.legend-gear.com

TOUR WITH CHARLEY

Well-known motorcycle adventurer, TV personality and *ARR* columnist Charley Boorman will again be joining Compass Expeditions for his fifth tour downunder on March 20–29. Next year's tour will be Tasmania and the high country. After first visiting every nook and cranny of glorious Tasmania, the group will then head back to the mainland and ride the Victorian high country through Bright, Kosciuszko National Park, Bateman's Bay and the NSW coast to Sydney. Luggage is carried in the support vehicle and you can ride your own bike or rent one of Compass Expeditions' BMWs for the occasion. How good is that?

Visit: compassexpeditions.com for more information.



READERS RITE

WINNER

WHAT THE PROBLEM IS

I have to admit that I read Chris Morison's letter (ARR #116) a few times, which I usually don't do, and it triggered writing this letter that I usually don't do either.

I ride a Sporty — which is a Harley-Davidson — but grew up with Japanese and Spanish bikes. I bought the Sporty because I like the look and because Harley usually doesn't change a lot on the bikes — except the colour — which will help with sourcing spares in future.

I didn't buy the Sporty to satisfy any desire for personal freedom nor to express my inner personality nor to inflate my ego nor to commute. Maybe my shrink will tell a different story, but I bought the Sporty because I just love riding a motorbike, it enables me to perceive nature more intensely and to have fun riding.

I love riding with my wife — she owns a Sporty too — cruiser groups, Harley-only groups, sports bikes, trikes and learner bikes because I love riding and I usually nod — if I'm not distracted — when I see another rider. I

nod not only to oncoming riders but riders at intersections, in car parks, and I nod if I see a rider on a scooter even if they don't wave back.

My question to Chris is why does he want Harley-Davidson to run a campaign if he has — in 40 years — never waved or nodded at a Harley rider? Would this change his view? I think if Chris would start waving at all bikes he could help to make the world a friendlier and better place.

Bernie Landmann
Brisbane, Qld

“Maybe my shrink will tell a different story, but I bought the Sporty because I just love riding a motorbike, it enables me to perceive nature more intensely and to have fun riding”

DIFFERENT TEACHINGS

Interesting article by Gregor Reynolds (ARR #116) regarding the shift in nature of road safety campaigns from educational to fear-based tactics. I agree and must add, fear begets more fear and eventually begets what is feared, therefore fear campaigns achieve the opposite of the intention.

On the other side of the coin and by the same token, as one pays more attention to inconsiderate drivers, one eventually begets a coincidence. What we continue to judge and pay attention to, we attract. Despite educational road safety campaigns, whether on the road or not, people will still be people. Acceptance is understanding, and despite what we may see on the road right in front of our noses, the journey

may be peaceful and harmonious.

On another note, beneath the article was a road safety message saying, “Don't drive like a W”, followed by a picture of an anchor. Hmm, does this also apply to a master baiter? Not necessary to answer that, I will work it out ...

Doggywoggyboy
Email

You only need to monitor your moods when you ride to see how they affect your experience.

Set out expecting to deal with idiots on the road and the idiots will get you down; set out with a good mindset, minding your business, and you'll barely notice the bad road users as you have a great ride. Perhaps we need to teach ourselves to ride above the anchors. — Matho

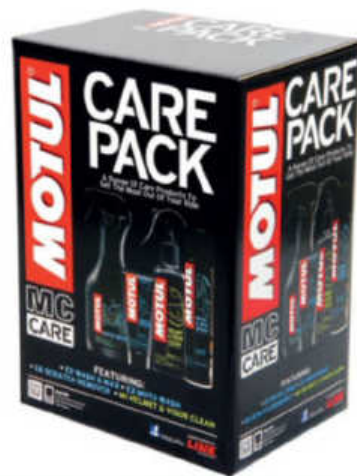
Don't forget to write! We mean it. We love to hear from you and everyone else does too; these pages are among the most popular in the magazine. Preferably, keep letters under 300 words so we can fit more in, though we will allow the odd exception without taking to it with the editorial knife. Yes, we will chop 'em when we have to. Do include your real name and some contact details, just in case we need to clarify something. Please write to roadrider@universalmagazines.com.au or send mail to Road Rider, Unit 5, 6–8 Byfield Street, North Ryde NSW 2113 — **Matho**

WIN THIS LOOK HOT

Every issue we're giving away this beaut pack of Motul cleaning gear worth \$49.95. All you have to do to be in with a chance of winning is write to us. We'll pick what we think is the best letter every month and the top blokes at Motul will fire out this pack to whoever wrote it. Simple. Pack includes some of the best washing and detailing products on the market:

- Wash & Wax, a waterless cleaner that leaves a wax coating
- Moto Wash, good for all surfaces
- Scratch Remover, a micro-abrasive cream for painted surfaces
- Helmet & Visor Clean, to keep your lid and your view pristine.

Email roadrider@universalmagazines.com.au or mail to ARR at 5/6–8 Byfield St, North Ryde NSW 2113. We'll do the rest.



MOTUL



MY TURN

I read David Francis's letter with interest, particularly his intention to ride around Australia. I did four years ago, at age 61, what I had talked about doing for years. When on holiday from New Zealand we had a spare day in Sydney and decided to have a look at the new BMWs. I tried out a new F650GS and liked it, thinking that was as far as it would go. It wasn't. My wife told me to get the money out of my pocket, buy the bike and get on with it. So I did.

My start point was obviously Sydney. From there I went up to Cape York and back down to Brisbane, then home to New Zealand for a break. Next I meandered south through the back country to Bathurst to do a couple of laps of the track, then inland to Broken Hill and down to Melbourne around the Great Ocean Road to Adelaide. From Adelaide I went up the centre through the Birdsville Track, joined the Savannah Way and on to Darwin. From

Darwin over to Broome, down to Perth, then round the bottom to Norseman and across the Nullarbor Plain back to Adelaide.

If I can do it, anyone can. Yes, I have ridden motorcycles for years, but this was my first major trip. I travelled

“Many people thought I was mad and that the trip was too dangerous. I made sure people knew where I was and I have got to say that security was never a problem. Everybody I met was great; it was the trip of a lifetime and I would go round again tomorrow.”

light, just myself and my tent, however I was well prepared and had all the relevant maintenance and safety equipment. The Beemer was excellent and I had no real problems. I had to free-camp at times but mainly used camping grounds. Many people thought I was mad and that the trip was too dangerous.

I made sure people knew where I was and I have got to say that security was never a problem. Everybody I met was great; it was the trip of a lifetime and I would go round again tomorrow. I had no real plan, I just lay back in my tent each night to think about the following day's ride, enjoying each day. I travelled approximately 30,000km.

For what it is worth, I wouldn't plan your days too much. The trip will work itself out as things always do and in my opinion it is more enjoyable this way.

Tim Roulston
Christchurch, NZ

TOURING LESSONS

I'm still enjoying the September issue but thought I'd comment on a couple of articles on touring. My first tour (apart from a brief Sydney-Newcastle return on my older brother's then-new SR500 back in '79) was Sydney-Melbourne via the old Hume Highway. Of course it wasn't the Old Hume Highway then as there were only a couple of short motorway sections at each end. The rest was as had been intended, linking the two major capitals via every tiny town they could find between, and over Razorback Mountain to boot!

By then I had bought the SR from big brother and with no more than a Belstaff jacket, light plastic wet-weather pants and a pair of very un-waterproof vinyl gloves from Omodies in Surry Hills I set out in late autumn, bound, I thought, for an overnight stop about half way in Gundagai. What said big brother didn't mention was that the weather would likely turn very cold, almost freezing even, venturing over the range between Goulburn and Yass. Nor did he advise of thermals or balaclava, silk inners or over gloves. No, this green teenager was dressed for day tripping about Sydney and quickly learned that Amco denim was no barrier to the cold ...

Stopping early by necessity in Yass, I spent the entire evening holed up in the cheapest, blandest motel I could find, sat in front of a small blow heater desperately and largely

“If I can do it, anyone can. Yes, I have ridden motorcycles for years, but this was my first major trip.”

unsuccessfully attempting to defrost my knees. The cold went to the marrow and taught me my first lesson in touring: dress warm! You can always take layers off if you have to.

The next day was entirely uneventful other than the sheer joie de vivre of being out in our wide brown(ish) land on a bike and heading for five years of Uni in a foreign state. The first morning in Melbourne, however, taught me my second lesson in touring: always, always wear earplugs. Despite the latest and greatest Arai, my ears were still ringing well into the next day or so, indicating permanent hearing damage. No Earmolds in those days, sadly.

Fast-forwarding to now and countless interstate rides later, the SR gave way after 23 years to a TDM 900 and I have developed a fine appreciation of the many back roads between Sydney and Melbourne, but one has to be prepared to give it two whole days in order to completely or mostly avoid the major highways. Perhaps my favourite involves the Tablelands Way to Goulburn, then Yass to

Wee Jasper and on to Tumut, Tumbarumba, Jingellic and either of the two Murray River rides, then Myrtleford, Mansfield etc to Melbourne. The extra time required is well worth it.

Another thing I have learned is that modern sport touring tyres really don't like some types of gravel and I don't mean they lack grip — if that is the case I simply slow down. They suffer greatly at times from cuts, sometimes deep ones if heavily loaded, and I sometimes wonder if the tyre plugs I carry would be capable of repairing a bad one. Having enjoyed travelling south down the Wee Jasper-Tumut road last January, I thought a northern ride through the same section after the Ulysses AGM in March was in order, however the lady at the servo in Tumut advised me otherwise after looking at my heavily loaded TDM. I went anyway and it transpired that fresh and very sharp, heavy, golf-ball-sized gravel had been laid for the logging trucks which frequent this road, leading to much damage but no loss of pressure to my rear tyre.

Life is turning full circle now and my son is riding, learning from my mistakes and experience, and I in turn am learning to see it all again from the perspective of a first-timer. The joie de vivre has returned and plans are well advanced for this summer's Uni break!

Chris Heggie
Blaxland, NSW



↑ Happy times before the tough lesson was learnt ...

BACK ROADS

I've been reading your fine mag for the past year, having returned to biking some three-and-a-half years ago after 27 years of family life. I just couldn't let the opportunity pass when our youngest returned from overseas to announce he might get a motorbike. His concerned-looking mum turned to me only to hear, "That's a great idea, mind if I get one too?" and so continues another wonderful adventure on two wheels.

I'm now on a 2014 Multistrada GT 1200S, having given my car to said son, who, incidentally, is now just beginning a family. This brings me to the question at hand: which way to go? At the start of November last year I headed off from Tassie, looking for adventure and on my way to Sydney. I had a great adventure finding my way to Wonnangatta Homestead in the Alpine National Park. Unfortunately said adventure lasted just two days. Having ridden into a sump along the track I caught myself out on a submerged obstacle and over went my MTS 1200S, sucking in a big gulp of the murky brown water. My

pride dented and looking at a 60km walk, I headed off and managed to catch a ride with a family to Dargo. Now fully recovered and fully replaced, thanks to Yamaha Motor Insurance, I'm off again, but looking for a little less adventure.

Your assistance is welcome — which way to go? I like to get off the highways, enjoy riding some gravel, but not at further risk of my pride or insurance on back country tracks. I'll get another bike for that.

I've been thinking about heading to Omeo (either via Myrtleford and Mt Beauty or via Sale and Bairnsdale) then up the Benambra-Corryong Road to Khancoban — before weaving my way towards Wollongong for the weekend. I have a vague notion about the Tumut-Wee Jasper Road but may save that for the ride south.

Any recommendations on route options or places to stay and visit are welcome. Preferably a mixture of riding experiences but ultimately the goal is to enjoy the trip and avoid calling the insurers. The guys at YMI were great to deal with and actually laughed when they googled Wonnangatta.

"Unfortunately said adventure just lasted for two days. Having ridden into a sump along the track I caught myself out on a submerged obstacle and over went my MTS 1200S, sucking in a big gulp of the murky brown water"

It was not a problem for them and they didn't hike up the premium on the new bike. I have four weekdays for the journey north, but only two days for the return trip to Melbourne and the ferry the following week.

David Clarke
Email

I haven't been through there for some time, David, but Omeo-Corryong-Khancoban is always a great run. Khancoban to Cabramurra and on to the Snowy Mountains Highway is a fun challenge on rough and narrow tar. You could go north to Tumut and then the Wee Jasper Road, but by the sounds of another letter just received it'd pay to ask about the road's condition before committing to it. Another choice is to go down to Adaminaby and find the gravel road that takes you into the southern tip of the ACT and on to Canberra. Alternatively, down around Corryong there is a series of minor roads, with a mixture of tar and gravel, that'll take you north towards Tumut, and I've always enjoyed them. As for where to stay, all those little places along the Murray (Jingellic etc) are friendly. Enjoy the ride! — Matho



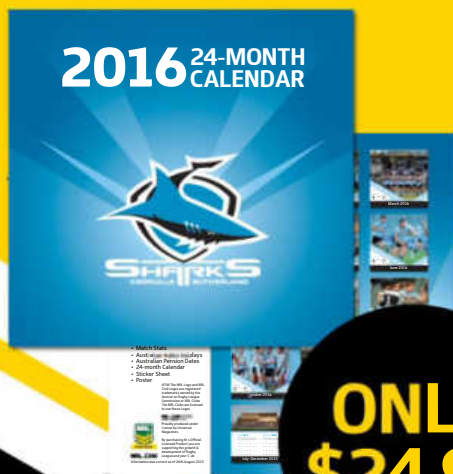
↑ Water and oil don't mix!



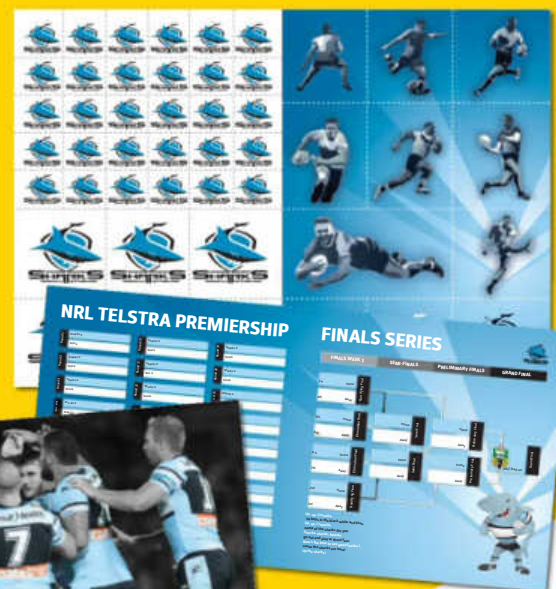
↑ Strapped in and off to get fixed

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ROAD BIKE & SCOOTER PRICE GUIDE

Can I afford it? Is there something better for the money?

New bike prices can go up and down like the stock market, so in every issue we'll bring you the sticker prices. To be completely up to date with things like factory discounts and incentives, check the *Road Rider* website (www.roadrider.com.au) where we will bring you all the special deals, bonus offers and cashback promotions we can find.

We have included the importers' websites, which is the place to go if you're looking for more information. You'll see that we haven't listed every bike on the market (yet) but we aim to get there with all of them.

Sometimes even we struggle to find the details of the smaller, newer importers. Meanwhile, enjoy this most meaningful of Australian bike listings, covering the bikes you're interested in.

The prices are the most up-to-date ones available from the distributors. They may change, of course, subject to specials coming and going.

We've also made it abundantly clear which prices are ride-away and which don't include on-road costs; the difference to your final payout can be significant, so don't compare apples with oranges.

BRAND & MODEL WE SAY PRICE

APRILIA

www.aprilia.com.au

Aprilia prices are maximum recommended advertised ride-away price.

Road

Shiver Sport 750 ABS.....	Oh so good	\$14,000ra
Tuono V4R APRC.....	Upright sportsbike	\$22,000ra
Tuono V4 1100 RR.....	Naked 1100cc V4? Yes!	\$23,000ra
Tuono V4 1100 Factory.....	Take the RR and add more.....	\$26,000ra
RSV4 R APRC.....	High tech, high spec	\$24,000ra
RSV4 RR.....	Higher spec, higher speed.....	\$25,000ra
RSV4 R Factory APRC ABS.....	Racing black.....	\$30,000ra
RSV4 RR Race Pack.....	Ready to race.....	\$31,000ra

Adv Touring

Caponord Strada	High-tech all-road traveller	\$20,000ra
Caponord Touring	Truly great all-rounder.....	\$23,000ra
Caponord Rally.....	The hardcore Capo	\$24,000ra

Scooters

SR50R Carb SBK.....	Biaggi replica	\$4000ra
SR MT 50 2T	Entry point	\$2900ra
SR MT 125 4T	Cheap commuting	\$3900ra
SR MT 125 4T SBK LE	SBK-styled commuter	\$3900ra
Scarabeo 200 ie.....	Crisp performer	\$5900ra
SR Max 300	Do it all	\$8000ra
SRV 850 ATC ABS	Large with the lot	\$15,000ra

BENELLI

www.urbanmotoimports.com.au

Road

BN251	Nice starter	\$TBA
BN302	Italy's response to the 300cc LAMS.....	\$5590+orc
BN600i.....	Base-model mid-sized four.....	\$8990+orc
BN600S LAMS	New LAMS model	\$8990+orc
BN600R	New sporty naked bike.....	\$9990+orc
BN600RS LAMS.....	Another new LAMS model.....	\$9990+orc
BN600GT	Mid-size sports-touring	\$8990+orc
BN600GTS.....	LAMS model.....	\$8990+orc
TNT 899	Mid-sized entertainer	\$16,990+orc
TNT 1130R.....	Naked dynamite.....	\$22,690+orc
Tre-K 1130.....	Out of the ordinary	\$18,490+orc

Adv Touring

TRE-K Amazonas	Be an individual	\$19,690+orc
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Scooters

Cafenero 150	Benelli enters the scooter market.....	\$8990+orc
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BIMOTA

www.urbanmotoimports.com.au

Road

BB3	1000cc BMW, Italian flair.....	\$72,888+orc
DB5R.....	Light and lovely sportsbike.....	\$37,990+orc

DB8 Oro Nero.....	Expensive excitement	\$84,990+orc
Tesi 3D Naked.....	The full skeleton on show.....	\$55,990+orc
DB9	Muscle streetfighter.....	\$44,990+orc
DB9S.....	Sharper on the street.....	\$46,990+orc
DB10	Sharp style.....	\$37,290+orc
DB11	Testastretta 11 at last.....	\$56,990+orc

BMW

www.bmwmotorrad.com.au

Road

F 800 R.....	Neat naked parallel-twin	\$13,100+orc
S 1000 R	Naked supermodel	\$19,290+orc
S 1000 RR.....	Still the one to beat.....	\$22,990+orc
S 1000 XR	Available mid-year.....	\$22,190+orc
HP4 Competition.....	For serious sports riders	\$32,450+orc
R 1200 R	Now with liquid cooling.....	\$21,950+orc
R 1200 R Sport	Naked and fit boxer	\$22,350+orc
R 1200 R Exclusive.....	Naked and special boxer.....	\$22,350+orc
R nineT	Simplicity with max style.....	\$21,250+orc
R 1200 RT.....	Have your cake and eat it.....	\$30,790+orc
K 1300 R	Evil Wulf.....	\$21,990+orc
K 1300 S	Autobahn eater	\$23,990+orc
K 1300 S Motorsport	Flashy sports-tourer for 2015.....	\$28,990+orc
K 1600 GT	Power touring	\$35,990+orc
K 1600 GTL	Euro luxury touring	\$37,590+orc
K 1600 GTL Exclusive.....	VIP	\$42,500+orc

Adv Touring

G 650 GS.....	You'll be surprised	\$9990+orc
G 650 GS Sertao.....	Rough it or not	\$10,990+orc
F 700 GS.....	Not really a 700	\$12,890+orc
F 700 GS	Low suspension model	\$13,140+orc
F 800 GS.....	Great adv tourer.....	\$16,690+orc
F 800 GS.....	Low suspension model	\$16,940+orc
F 800 GS Adventure	Go further.....	\$18,650+orc
F 800 GT	Dynamically designed.....	\$16,300+orc
R 1200 GS	All-road master.....	\$21,950+orc
R 1200 GS Adventure.....	Luxuriously roughing it.....	\$24,550+orc

Scooter

C 600 Sport.....	Sporty maxi	\$13,990+orc
C 600 Sport Special Edition.....	Here in October	\$15,090+orc
C 650 GT.....	Let's tour!	\$14,990+orc
C 650 GT Special Edition	Seat heating.....	\$16,665+orc
C 650 GT SE LS	Low suspension model	\$16,465+orc

BOLLINI

www.motorsportimporters.com.au

Road

Speed 200	Economy ticket	\$2290+orc
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Cruiser

Retro 200.....	New release.....	\$TBA
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CAN-AM (BRP)www.brp.com**Road**

Spyder RS SM5.....	The “Spyder” experience.....	\$19,990+orc
Spyder RSS SE5.....	Supersports auto.....	\$23,990+orc
Spyder RS SPE SE5.....	Special-edition RS.....	\$25,390+orc
Spyder ST SE5.....	The sports-touring Spyder.....	\$25,490+orc
Spyder ST LTD SE5.....	The ST with more.....	\$28,990+orc
Spyder F3 SM6.....	Cruiser-style model with 1330cc triple.....	\$25,790+orc
Spyder F3 S SE6.....	F3 with semi-auto gears and more.....	\$28,890+orc
Spyder RT SM6.....	New 1330cc triple engine.....	\$31,490+orc
Spyder RTS SE6.....	RT plus semi-auto and more.....	\$39,990+orc
Spyder RT Limited SE6.....	The full touring triple.....	\$41,990+orc
Spyder RT SPE.....	Top-spec special edition.....	\$41,690+orc

CF MOTOwww.cfmoto.com.au**Road**

VNIGHT.....	Great learner.....	\$2690+orc
Jetmax 250.....	Freeway capable scooter.....	\$4190+orc
Leader.....	Not fussy.....	\$2190+orc
650NK.....	May ruffle some feathers.....	\$6290+orc
650TK.....	Bargain touring.....	\$7749+orc

Cruiser

V5.....	Where's the engine?.....	\$4190+orc
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CONFEDERATEwww.urbanmotoimports.com.au**Cruiser**

R131 Fighter.....	Heavyweight champ.....	\$POA
X132 Hellcat.....	Badass.....	\$79,990+orc
X132 Hellcat Combat.....	American war machine.....	\$94,990+orc
X132 Hellcat Speedster.....	American muscle.....	\$98,000+orc
X135 Wraith.....	Industrial art.....	\$POA
R135 Wraith Combat.....	American firepower.....	\$POA

DAELIMwww.daelim.com.au**Road**

VJF250.....	Adequate style.....	\$3990+orc
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Cruiser

Daystar 250 EFI.....	Fat, feet-forward cruiser.....	\$4920+orc
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Scooter

Bbone.....	Its clothes are off.....	\$3490+orc
Besbi.....	Small and cute.....	\$2190+orc
S1.....	Nice style.....	\$2990+orc

DUCATIwww.ducati.com.au**Road**

Monster 659 ABS.....	Monster the LAM.....	\$12,990+orc
Ducati Scrambler Icon (Ducati Red) ..	Entry-level.....	\$12,990+orc
Ducati Scrambler Icon ('62Yellow)	As above but yellower.....	\$13,140+orc
Ducati Scrambler Urban Enduro.....	For the burbs and backroads.....	\$14,990+orc
Ducati Scrambler Classic.....	Living in the '70s.....	\$14,990+orc
Ducati Scrambler Full Throttle.....	Flat track performer.....	\$14,990+orc
Monster 821 Dark.....	The little beast steps up.....	\$16,290+orc
Monster 821 Red.....	Red devil.....	\$16,790+orc
Monster 821 White.....	Angelic monster.....	\$16,990+orc
Streetfighter 848.....	Precision fighter, special price.....	\$17,490+orc
Panigale 899 Red.....	Smaller, sweeter superbike.....	\$19,990+orc
Panigale 899.....	In white.....	\$20,490+orc
Hypermotard Red.....	A hooligan on wheels.....	\$16,990+orc
Hypermotard.....	In black.....	\$17,290+orc
Hypermotard SP.....	With tricked-up suspension.....	\$21,490+orc
Hyperstrada.....	Manners & madness.....	\$17,990+orc
Monster 1200.....	Original 1200.....	\$19,990+orc
Monster 1200 S Red.....	With better bits.....	\$24,290+orc
Monster 1200 S.....	In white.....	\$24,490+orc
Panigale 1299.....	100cc more for 2015.....	\$27,990+orc
Panigale S ABS.....	Electronic Öhlins!.....	\$33,990+orc
Panigale R ABS.....	Race passion.....	\$45,990+orc

Cruiser

Diavel.....	A true power-cruiser.....	\$24,490+orc
Diavel Red.....	The devil on your shoulder.....	\$24,990+orc
Diavel Carbon Red.....	Deal with the devil.....	\$30,290+orc
Diavel Carbon White.....	An angel in disguise?.....	\$30,490+orc
Diavel Titanium.....	Harder than steel.....	\$39,990+orc

Adv Touring

Multistrada 1200 DVT.....	Smoother all-round master.....	\$23,990+orc
Multistrada S DVT.....	Higher tech, in red.....	\$27,990+orc
Multistrada S DVT.....	In white.....	\$28,490+orc

ERIK BUELL RACINGwww.urbanmotoimports.com.au**Road**

1190RS Carbon.....	175hp, 176kg of joy.....	\$56,990+orc
1190RX.....	Sporting masterpiece.....	\$26,490+orc
1190SX.....	Superbike basis.....	\$23,490+orc
1190AX.....	The adventurous one.....	\$TBA



■ Harley-Davidson's 2016 range is now on sale, with changes to pricing as well as the model line-up. The new models include the Softail Slim S and the Fat Boy S, both part of a new S-series range and fitted with the bigger, more powerful 110i engine — the first time it has been fitted to non-CVO models. The Softail Standard has been removed from the current line-up and many models across the range have received a very slight price hike. The Softail Slim S colour choices include the WWII-inspired pictured here; the price is \$28,995 ride-away.

HARLEY-DAVIDSONwww.harley-davidson.com**All H-D prices are ride-away.****Cruiser**

XG500 Street 500.....	Learner legal.....	\$10,750ra
XL883L SuperLow.....	For the shorties.....	\$14,995ra
XL883N Iron 883.....	Iron tough.....	\$14,995ra
XL1200C Custom.....	Customary show off.....	\$18,750ra
XL1200X Forty-Eight.....	Retro cool.....	\$19,250ra
XL1200V Seventy-Two.....	Vintage muscle.....	\$18,495ra
XL1200T Super Low.....	Cool little tourer.....	\$19,495ra
VRSCDX Night Rod Special.....	Drag bike.....	\$27,995ra
VRSCF Muscle.....	Muscle me.....	\$27,495ra
FXDB Street Bob.....	Versatile.....	\$22,495ra
FXDBB Street Bob Special.....	Street smarts.....	\$23,995ra
FXDL Low Rider.....	Not laying low.....	\$23,495ra
FXDWG Wide Glide.....	Let your hair hang down.....	\$24,995ra
FXDF Fat Bob.....	Lay off the burgers, Bob!.....	\$25,495ra
FLD Dyna Switchback.....	Dress up, dress down.....	\$26,250ra
FLS Softail Slim.....	Slim, yet PH fat!.....	\$26,495ra
FLSS Softail Slim.....	110ci of S-series grunt.....	\$28,995ra
FLSTFB Fat Boy Lo.....	Low bruiser.....	\$28,750ra
FLSTF Fat Boy.....	Big bruiser.....	\$29,250ra
FLSTFBS Fat Boy S.....	110ci of S-series grunt.....	\$31,495ra
FLSTN Softail Deluxe.....	Classy dude.....	\$29,250ra
FXSB Breakout.....	Urban street styling.....	\$29,750ra
FLSTC Heritage S'tail Classic.....	Visually beautiful.....	\$32,250ra
FLHRC Road King Classic.....	Be the king.....	\$32,495ra
FLHXS Street Glide Special.....	The original bagger.....	\$34,995ra

PRICE GUIDE

FLTRXS Road Glide Special.....	Dynamic, fixed-fairing tourer	\$34,750ra
FLHTK Ultra Limited	A Hogburger with the lot	\$38,250ra

HONDA

www.honda.com.au

Road		
CB125E	Cheap commuter	\$2199+orc
CB300FA.....	250cc weight, 300cc power	\$5699+orc
CBR300.....	Big H attacks the Ninja 300	\$4999+orc
CBR300 ABS	The anti-lock brake option	\$5499+orc
CBR300R.....	Special edition	\$5199+orc
CBR300R.....	Special edition ABS	\$5699+orc
CB400A ABS	Bulletproof	\$9999+orc
CBR500R.....	Sporty little twin	\$7499+orc
CBR500R ABS.....	ABS option.....	\$7999+orc
CB500F ABS.....	Sweet as.....	\$7499+orc
CB650F ABS.....	New naked four.....	\$9999+orc
CBR600RR.....	Versatile supersport.....	\$14,390+orc
CBR650F ABS	Mid-ranger with torque.....	\$10,599+orc
CTX700DA	Dual Clutch Transmission	\$10,899+orc
NC750SA ABS	The most practical naked bike?.....	\$8899+orc
VFR800	Tried and true package	\$14,699+orc
VFR800X Crossrunner.....	Sports-tourer goes all-rounder	\$16,299+orc
CBR1000RR.....	Ride what Casey rides.....	\$16,999+orc
CBR1000RR ABS.....	Blade with braking backup	\$16,899+orc
VFR1200F ABS	For the tech heads.....	\$16,999+orc
GL1800B F6B.....	Stripped Wing.....	\$25,999+orc
GL1800 Goldwing Luxury.....	The ultimate luxury tourer	\$36,299+orc

Cruiser		
VT400	Classic-styled LAM	\$9399+orc
CTX700N ABS	A bike for everything	\$9499+orc
VT750C Shadow	Classic appeal.....	\$11,749+orc
CTX1300.....	V4 cruiser with unique style	\$18,499+orc
VT1300CX Fury	Chopped dragster.....	\$15,599+orc
GL1800C F6C Valkyrie	Valkyrie returns with muscle.....	\$20,199+orc

Adv Touring		
CB500X ABS.....	Adventure sports	\$7599+orc
VFR1200X Crosstourer ABS.....	Smooth and comfy all-roader.....	\$17,499+orc

Scooter		
Dio 110	New kid in town	\$2699+orc
PCX150.....	Stylish and practical	\$4299+orc
NSS300 Forza.....	Sporty and flexible.....	\$7099+orc

HYOSUNG

www.hyosung.com.au

Road		
GT250	Great beginner	\$2990+orc
GT650	Naked value and style.....	\$5190+orc
GT650R.....	Easy, sporty, affordable.....	\$5490+orc

Cruiser		
GV250 Aquila.....	Little cutie.....	\$3990+orc
GV650C Aquila Classic.....	LAMS value	\$6490+orc

INDIAN MOTORCYCLE

www.indianmotorcycle.com.au

Cruiser		
Scout	Sportster meets V-Rod?	\$17,995ra
Chief Dark Horse.....	Lots of attitude.....	\$26,995ra
Chief	Leading the tribe back!	\$28,995ra
Chief Vintage	Signature heritage aesthetic	\$31,495ra
Chieftain	First Indian tourer/bagger	\$35,995ra
Roadmaster	Full-dress tourer.....	\$38,995ra

KAWASAKI

www.kawasaki.com.au

Road		
Z250SL	New LAMS model	\$5299+orc
Z250SLA.....	New LAMS with ABS.....	\$5599+orc
Z300 ABS	Ninja turned streetfighter	\$5999+orc
Ninja 300.....	Even better again!.....	\$5699+orc
Ninja 300 SE.....	Tastes like lime	\$6399+orc
Ninja 300 SE ABS.....	30th Anniversary edition.....	\$6399+orc
ER-6n/nL ABS	Quirky.....	\$9999+orc
Ninja 650/L ABS	Mid-sized gem.....	\$10,499+orc

■ Kawasaki has also released the 2016-model Vulcan S with two new colour schemes, matte orange and metallic matte carbon black. Pricing has been kept the same as the 2015 model at \$9999+orc.



Ninja ZX-6R (599).....	Striking	\$14,999+orc
Ninja ZX-6R ABS (636) SE	Bigger, grunter, prettier	\$16,649+orc
Z800 ABS	Sharper.....	\$12,999+orc
W800SE.....	Nostalgic, relaxed cruising	\$12,499+orc
Z1000 ABS SE.....	Special edition, 2016 model.....	\$15,499+orc
Ninja 1000 ABS	A sword with soul.....	\$15,999+orc
Ninja ZX-10R	Non-ABS 30th Anniv model	\$18,999+orc
Ninja ZX-10R ABS	30th Anniversary model.....	\$20,699+orc
Ninja H2	Supercharged superbike.....	\$33,000+orc
1400GTR ABS.....	Transcontinental.....	\$24,999+orc
Ninja ZX-14R ABS SE	Special edition.....	\$20,299+orc
Ninja ZX-14R ABS SE Öhlins.....	Öhlins, white, gold, scorching.....	\$21,799+orc

Cruiser		
Vulcan S	LAMS cruisin'	\$9999+orc
Vulcan 900 Classic SE	Classically glamorous	\$12,499+orc
Vulcan 900 Custom.....	Sleek-looking mid-weight.....	\$12,699+orc
Vulcan 1700 Classic ABS.....	Great blank canvas.....	\$19,999+orc
Vulcan 1700 Nomad ABS.....	Add a bit of bling.....	\$22,999+orc
Vulcan 1700 Vaquero ABS.....	Go to the dark side.....	\$24,499+orc
Vulcan 1700 Voyager ABS.....	Plush ride	\$25,999+orc

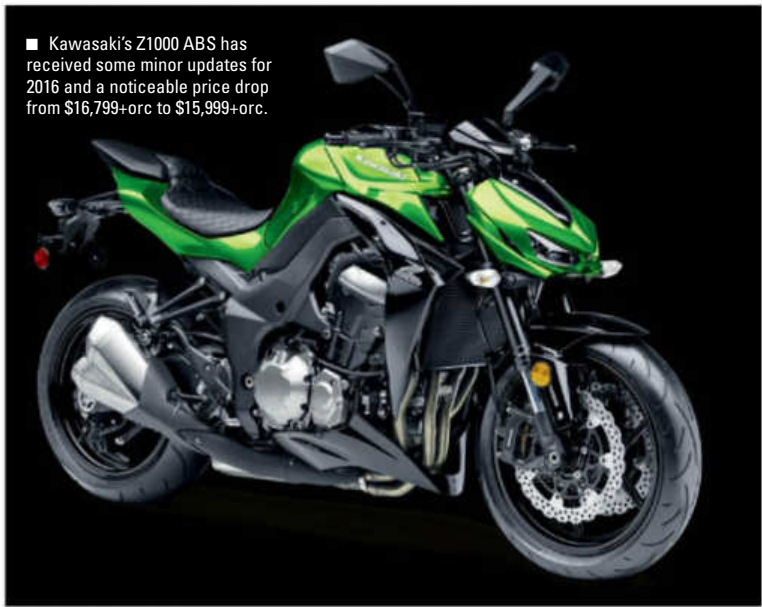
Adv Touring		
KLR650	Bargain with a capital B	\$8099+orc
Versys 650 ABS	Appealing all-rounder	\$9999+orc
Versys 650L ABS	LAMS model.....	\$9999+orc
Versys 1000	Bitumen burner	\$15,999+orc

KTM

www.ktm.com.au

Road		
390 Duke	Z300 beater?	\$7295+orc
390 RC	All new available soon	\$8295+orc

■ Kawasaki's Z1000 ABS has received some minor updates for 2016 and a noticeable price drop from \$16,799+orc to \$15,999+orc.



■ The exclusive new F3 800 "Solarbeam" comes from a new partnership between MV Agusta and Mercedes-AMG. Adopting the colour concept of the Mercedes-AMG GT, the show bike exudes style, with black wheels, black highlights and the AMG logo on the sides of the trim. No word yet on when or if this model will be available in Australia but we will keep you posted.



690 Duke R.....	The sportier motard.....	\$14,495+orc
1190 RC8 R.....	The orange flash.....	\$25,995+orc
1290 Super Duke R.....	Ballsy streetfighter.....	\$24,995+orc

Adv Touring

690 Enduro R.....	Extreme riders only.....	\$14,695+orc
1050 Adventure.....	Adventure stripped bare.....	\$17,995+orc
1190 Adventure.....	High-tech adventurer.....	\$23,995+orc
1190 Adventure R.....	Add more adventure.....	\$24,995+orc
1290 Super Adventure.....	The ultimate Adventure.....	\$26,995+orc

KYMC

www.kymco.com.au

Scooter

Like 125.....	Fall in love.....	\$2995+orc
Super 8 125.....	Cool jigger.....	\$2895+orc
Espresso 150.....	I'll take a double shot.....	\$3199+orc
Like 200.....	Classic performer.....	\$3495+orc
People GT300i.....	For the people.....	\$6345+orc
Downtown 300i ABS.....	All-rounder with ABS.....	\$7495+orc

Road

CK 125.....	No nonsense.....	\$2495+orc
Venox 250.....	Value and looks.....	\$6199+orc

LARO

www.laro.com.au

Road

V Retro 250.....	DT250 clone.....	\$2990+orc
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Cruiser

Cruiser 250.....	Learner's ride.....	\$3999+orc
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MEGELLI

www.megelli.com

Road

250S.....	Nice looker.....	\$4250+orc
250R.....	Italian styling.....	\$4850+orc
250SE.....	Sportsbike handling.....	\$5650+orc

MOTO GUZZI

www.motoguzzi.com.au

Moto Guzzi prices are maximum recommended advertised ride-away price.

Road

V7 Stone II.....	Minimalist retro.....	\$14,000ra
V7 Special II.....	Faithful to the original V7.....	\$14,500ra
V7 Racer SE.....	Limited edition marvel.....	\$17,000ra
1200 Sport 4V SE.....	Grunter.....	\$19,400ra
Griso 1200 8V.....	Grand slam.....	\$21,500ra

Adv Touring

Stelvio 1200 8V NTX ABS.....	Big brute.....	\$23,500ra
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Cruiser

California 1400 Custom.....	Kalifornia attitude.....	\$23,000ra
California Audace.....	Old school style.....	\$23,500ra
California Eldorado.....	Blast from the past.....	\$24,000ra
California 1400 Touring.....	All a Cali should be.....	\$26,000ra
California Touring SE.....	Special Edition.....	\$26,500ra

MV AGUSTA

www.mvagustaimports.com.au

All MV Agusta prices are ride-away.

Road

Brutale 675 EAS.....	Bit of oomph at a good price.....	\$15,799ra
F3 675.....	Sweet.....	\$18,699ra
Brutale 800 EAS.....	More power.....	\$17,699ra
Brutale 800 RR.....	More power, more handling.....	\$19,999ra
F3 800.....	Track performance.....	\$19,999ra
Stradale 800.....	An all-round MV.....	\$19,999ra
Turismo Veloce 800.....	All-roader with the MV edge.....	\$20,499ra
Turismo Veloce 800 Lusso.....	Up-spec all-roader.....	\$23,499
Brutale 800 Dragster.....	Nanananana Batman!.....	\$20,499ra
Brutale 800 Dragster RR.....	Batman meets Gucci.....	\$22,999ra
F4 1000.....	Beauty and the beast within.....	\$24,499ra
F4 1000 RR.....	Exotic weapon.....	\$33,999ra
F4 RC.....	The ultimate F4.....	\$55,880ra
Brutale 1090.....	More charm.....	\$17,990ra
Brutale RR 1090.....	Unleash the brute within.....	\$22,999ra
Brutale 1090 Corsa.....	Top jock.....	\$27,999ra

PGO

www.motorsportimporters.com.au

Scooter

Ligero 50.....	Good, little package.....	\$1990+orc
Ligero 150.....	Good, small package.....	\$3290+orc
X-Hot.....	It's a hottie.....	\$3990+orc
Gmax.....	Go to the max.....	\$4700+orc

PIAGGIO

www.piaggio.com.au

Scooter

Typhoon 125.....	Blow you away.....	\$2890+orc
Fly 150ie.....	Buzz around the city.....	\$3490+orc
Liberty 150ie.....	Big wheel freedom.....	\$3990+orc
Beverly 350.....	Higher performance.....	\$7990+orc
Yourban 300.....	Leaning three-wheeler.....	\$9490+orc
X10 500.....	Big features.....	\$10,990+orc

ROYAL ENFIELD

www.royalenfieldaustralia.com

Road

B5 Bullet 500.....	Fire your guns.....	\$7490ra
C5 Classic 500.....	Individual style.....	\$7790ra
GT Continental.....	Cafe racer like they used to be.....	\$8590ra
Despatch 500.....	Limited edition that delivers.....	\$8790ra

SUZUKI

www.suzukimotorcycles.com.au

Road

Inazuma 250.....	Let your inner zoomer out.....	\$4990+orc
TU250XL3.....	Retro learner.....	\$5990+orc
DR-Z400SM.....	Everyday motard.....	\$8990+orc
SFV650/LAMS.....	Commuting and fun duties.....	\$9990+orc
GSX650F/LAMS.....	Silky smooth.....	\$10,490+orc
GSX-R600.....	Angry bee.....	\$14,990+orc
GSR750.....	Naked cracker.....	\$10,790+orc
GSX-R750.....	The legend continues.....	\$15,990+orc
GSX-R1000.....	Even lighter and faster.....	\$18,490+orc
GSX-S1000.....	Naked superbike for 2015.....	\$14,990+orc
GSX-S1000F.....	2015's new super-tourer.....	\$15,790+orc
GSF1250S Bandit ABS.....	Long-distance ease.....	\$12,990+orc
GSX1250FA.....	A little bit of everything.....	\$14,990+orc
GSX1300R Hayabusa.....	Soar like an eagle.....	\$19,290+orc

Cruiser

VL250 Intruder.....	Bang that drum.....	\$6690+orc
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PRICE GUIDE

LS650 Boulevard S40	Big single cylinder	\$7990+orc
VL800 C50T.....	All-new class.....	\$10,990+orc
VL1500 C90T.....	Bad boy	\$15,490+orc
VLR1800T C109RT.....	Now as a tourer.....	\$18,990+orc
VZR1800 M109R.....	Beaut and brutal.....	\$18,990+orc
VZR1800 M109R.....	Black edition	\$19,490+orc

Adv Touring

DL650 V-Strom	Deservedly a big seller	\$10,290+orc
DL650 V-Strom LAMS	Learner approved model	\$11,290+orc
DL650 V-Strom XT.....	Re-styled and updated for 2015	\$11,490+orc
DL650 V-Strom XT LAMS.....	Learner approved.....	\$10,990+orc
DL1000 V-Strom	Powerfully competent	\$15,490+orc

Scooter

UK110 Address	New city slicker	\$2490+orc
AN200A Burgman 200 ABS	The smallest city burger	\$5490+orc
AN650A Burgman ABS.....	A maxi to tour on	\$13,590+orc

SYM www.scoota.com.au

Scooter

Classic 150	Noble ride	\$3199+orc
VS 150	Branch away	\$3549+orc
Symphony 150	Sporty big wheeler	\$3399+orc
HD Evo 200	Whacko!	\$5199+orc
CityCom 300i.....	Practical and competitive.....	\$6099+orc
Firenze 300.....	Full of features.....	\$6199+orc
MaxSym 400i	Ride-away price.....	\$8449+orc

TGB www.tgbscooters.com.au

Scooter

Bellavita 125	Very chic	\$3990+orc
X-Race 150	You'll need knee sliders	\$2590+orc
Bullet 150	Small-calibre projectile	\$3390+orc
Xmotion 300.....	Smooth mover	\$4990+orc
Bellavita 300i	Very chic, and bigger	\$5490+orc

TORINO www.torinomotorcycles.com.au

Torino ride-away prices are mostly Sydney-based and may vary elsewhere.

Cruiser

Veloce 250	American styled	\$4695ra
Titan 250	Chop chop.....	\$TBA

Scooter

Galetta Retro.....	Plenty of features	\$2195ra
Aero Sport	Cut the wind	\$2195ra
Famosa	City chic	\$2395ra
Messina Classic.....	New retro (Vespa) beauty	\$3495ra

TRIUMPH www.triumphmotorcycles.com.au

Road

StreetTriple 660 LAMS.....	Learner-legal thrills	\$12,490+orc
StreetTriple 675 ABS	Streets ahead.....	\$12,990+orc
StreetTriple 675 R ABS.....	Even further ahead	\$13,990+orc
StreetTriple RX SE.....	Inspired by the Daytona 675.....	\$14,990+orc
Daytona 675 ABS	Supersport gem	\$14,990+orc
Daytona 675R ABS.....	Track day heaven	\$16,990+orc
Bonneville	Tradition reborn	\$12,490+orc
Bonneville.....	Two tone	\$12,990+orc
BonnevilleT100 Black.....	Livin' in the '70s	\$13,490+orc
BonnevilleT100 A2.....	Nostalgia rules	\$14,250+orc
BonnevilleT100 SE	Special edition.....	\$14,990+orc
Bonneville Newchurch SE	April 2015	\$12,990+orc
BonnevilleT214 Land Speed LE.....	Coming soon	\$14,490+orc
Bonneville Spirit SE.....	April 2015	\$13,990+orc
Scrambler	Dirt track racer	\$14,390+orc
Scrambler	Two tone	\$14,990+orc
Thruxton	To the café!	\$14,390+orc
Thruxton Ace SE	Ace Café special edition.....	\$14,990+orc
Speed Triple ABS.....	It's a gem	\$16,990+orc
Speed Triple SE 94	Anniversary homage.....	\$17,490+orc
Speed Triple R ABS	Sex on wheels	\$19,990+orc

SpeedTriple R SE 94.....	Anniversary homage.....	\$20,490+orc
Trophy SE.....	Superb tourer	\$27,990+orc

Cruiser

America	Easy urban rider	\$13,490ra
Speed Master	All round goodness	\$13,090+orc
Thunderbird ABS.....	Aptly named flyer	\$19,990+orc
Thunderbird ABSTT	Two-tone paint	\$19,990ra
Thunderbird Storm ABS	Thunderous	\$20,990+orc
Thunderbird ABS HAZE	Shine.....	\$21,990+orc
Thunderbird Nightstorm	The dark and stormy one.....	\$22,990+orc
Thunderbird Commander	The bigger, tougher T-bird.....	\$21,490+orc
Thunderbird Commander TT.....	Two-tone paint	\$21,990+orc
Thunderbird LT.....	T-bird goes touring.....	\$23,490+orc
Thunderbird LTTT.....	Two-tone paint	\$23,990+orc
Rocket III Roadster ABS.....	What's not to love about 2300cc?	\$22,490+orc
Rocket X	Bad to the bone.....	\$23,490+orc
Rocket III Touring ABS.....	Reasonably easy to ride.....	\$24,490+orc

Adv Touring

Tiger 800 XR.....	Great all-rounder.....	\$15,090+orc
Tiger 800 XRx Low	Lowered seat height	\$15,090+orc
Tiger 800 XRx.....	Hi-tech all-rounder	16,590+orc
Tiger 800 XRT.....	Equipped for touring	\$17,890+orc
Tiger 800 XC.....	The more hardcore Tiger.....	\$16,590+orc
Tiger 800 XCx Low	Lowered seat height	\$16,590+orc
Tiger 800 XCx.....	Hi-tech and hardcore	\$17,690+orc
Tiger 800 XCA	Equipped for adventure	\$19,390+orc
Tiger 1050 Sport ABS.....	More growl for the road.....	\$15,990+orc
Tiger Explorer 1200.....	True adventure-tourer	\$20,490+orc
Tiger Explorer Wire Wheels.....	The tougher version	\$20,990+orc

URAL www.imz-ural.com.au

Road

T	Cult status outfit.....	\$20,340+orc
cT	Lower stance, better handling.....	\$20,340+orc
Retro	The classic of classics.....	\$23,410+orc
Tourist.....	Sidecar touring in classic elegance	\$22,500+orc

Adv Touring

Ranger	The tougher option.....	\$23,420+orc
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■ Vespa has released a new “touring” PX150 that comes equipped with front and rear carry racks. Only 40 of them have been released in Australia at \$6790+orc.



VESPA www.vespa.com.au

Scooter

Primavera LX125 3-Valve.....	For the designer in you	\$5590+orc
Primavera LX150 3-Valve.....	With a bit more oomph.....	\$6290+orc
PX150	The purist's ride.....	\$6490+orc
PX150Touring.....	Touring edition	\$6790+orc

Sprint 150ie 3V	Sporty looks	\$6590+orc
GTS150ie 3V	Practical	\$6590+orc
GTS250ie FL	Style in a great package	\$7890+orc
GTS300 Super FL ABS	Vroom vroom	\$9190+orc
GTS300 Super Sport FL	Sportier style	\$9490+orc
946 Bellissima	Limited stock	\$12,990+orc

VICTORY

www.victorymotorcycles.com.au

All Victory prices are ride-away.

Cruiser

Vegas 8 Ball	Sink the 8-ball	\$19,995ra
High-Ball	Ol' skool cool	\$20,995ra
Hammer 8 Ball	Hammer that 8-ball	\$21,995ra
Judge	A younger Victory	\$21,995ra
Gunner	Very cool bobber	\$20,995ra
Hammer S	Hammer it!	\$23,995ra
Jackpot	Showroom custom	\$24,995ra
Boardwalk Black	Cool classic in black	\$23,495ra
Boardwalk Pearl White	Cool classic in white	\$23,995ra
Cross Country	Comfortable touring	\$27,495ra
Cross Country Tour	Ultra-comfortable touring	\$29,995ra
Magnum	Cross country bling	\$29,995ra
Vision Tour	Space age looks	\$31,995ra

VIPER

www.urbanmotoimports.com.au

Cruiser

Black Diamond	2500cc of raw grunt	\$54,990+orc
Diamondback	Cruising superpower	\$54,990+orc

■ Yamaha's 125 Vity scooter has been replaced with the slightly smaller 115 D'elight. Available in dealerships for \$3399+orc.



YAMAHA

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FZ6R SP	Special edition	\$10,499+orc
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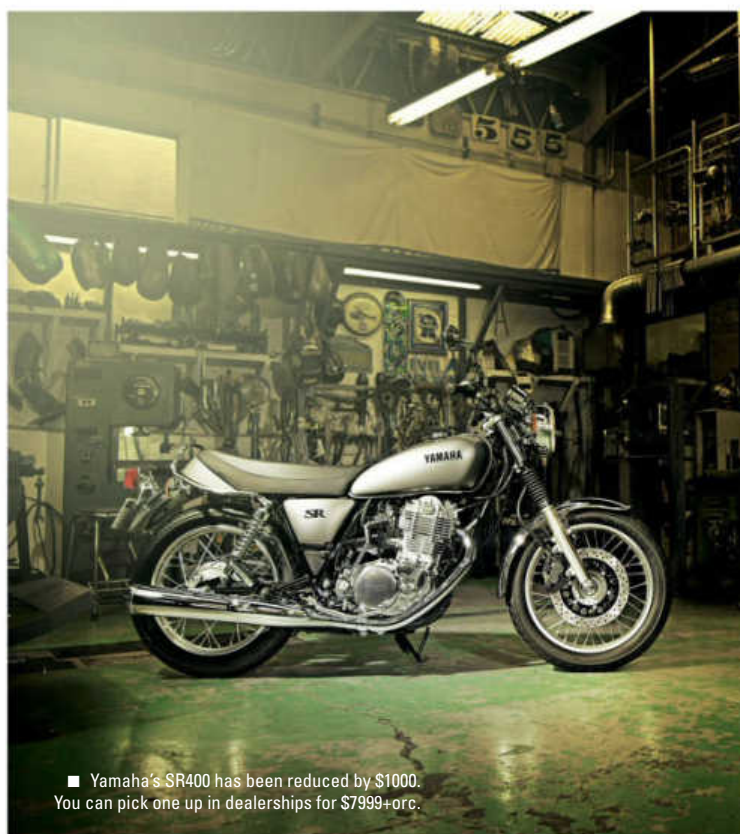
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TMAX 530	Maxi now with LED lights etc	\$13,499+orc
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■ Yamaha's SR400 has been reduced by \$1000. You can pick one up in dealerships for \$7999+orc.

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The collage features several items: a large magazine cover titled 'THE TOURING MOTORCYCLE' by Jeff Ware & Kris Hodgson, showing two riders on a red and yellow motorcycle; a smaller magazine cover for 'CLASSIC BIKES 2016 CALENDAR' with a grid of classic bikes; a full-page photograph of an orange and black Kawasaki 1400GTR motorcycle; and a magazine spread showing the 'ENGINE', 'CHASSIS', and 'STYLING & ELECTRONICS' sections for the Kawasaki 1400GTR, with a large image of the bike in motion.

THE TOURING MOTORCYCLE
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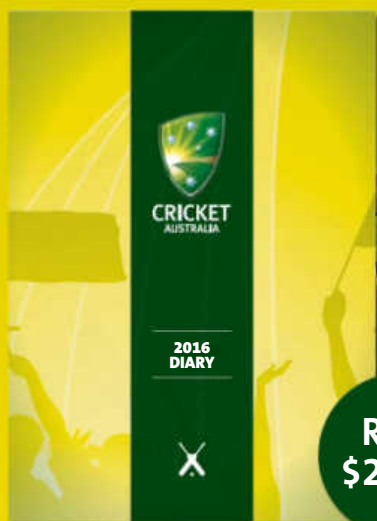
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SPEAKING FROM EXPERIENCE

The saga of the little red fuse

The boss and I had taken three months off to ride around Europe, UK and Ireland. At the time of the failure of the red fuse we were only just over a week from going home. We had been as far as Spain, southern Italy, Albania and had just returned from Ireland.

The Foxy Suzuki had transported us nearly 14,000km on this ride and had done nearly 70,000km at the time of the incident. The motorcycle in question is a 2012 Suzuki DL 650A that is, according to Suzuki, painted a "Foxy Orange". Hence the name.

This story is the saga of the Foxy Orange Suzuki V-Strom. We know just how reliable the Suzuki is; they just don't break down. However, occasionally they will be inflicted with a virus known as the Lucas Prince of Darkness Syndrome ("LPoDS").

While the V-Strom was being ridden in the pouring rain across Wales the virus struck. It came to a halt in the large, muddy gravel driveway of a woman's home who immediately demanded that I remove myself, pillion and machine immediately due to the fact that the machine was blocking the ingress and egress of the woman and that her children would be alarmed at the sight of two motorcycle riders in

their driveway in the pouring rain. I pushed the V-Strom a hundred metres up the road while being harangued by the woman.

Shortly after, a mechanic who was working on a truck at the woman's place turned up to help. Between the nasty bikie and the mechanic a red fuse was located that had expired. It was replaced by a larger blue fuse working on the principle that bigger is better and lo and behold the Foxy V-Strom found life and made noise.

However, this was not to last. After 20km it went dark again so another large fuse was installed, but it only lasted 5km. At this stage I decided that a very large fuse was required and it was installed. But the V-Strom didn't want this and blew that fuse plus the big main fuse.

I had a friend in Wales called Cliff. In fact, he was going there for five days R&R with his wife. After many phone calls and several hours later a vehicle was seen coming. It was a 4WD towing a covered wagon and it even had a hay lining to help the stricken Suzuki lie down in comfort for the 64km journey to a warm and inviting garage.

Cliff had a garage, was an electrical engineer and had the correct tools for the job. It had stopped raining and we had arranged for a five-day stay at the garage.

Day 1, Wednesday: The Foxy Suzuki was disassembled and nothing could be found, so we had a meeting involving many jokes and a lot of grapes in a bottle. Discussions took place where many theories were bandied about.

Day 2, Thursday: Many things were done to the lovely Foxy Suzuki to no avail. This was frustrating both to myself and the now top auto electrician Cliff. Late in the night, when the Foxy Suzuki's lights went out, we thought the problem was fixed when we found a corroded multi plug. All was packed away for the night with great expectations for the test ride in the morning.

Day 3, Friday: Up early for the test ride, with jacket and waterproof pants on as it was

still raining. Away I went only 100m before succumbing to LPoDS in the cylinders.

After pushing it back to the garage, we checked out the availability of a small white van to transport the V-Strom to its point of departure at Felixstowe. The decision was made that if the virus had not been found by early afternoon, the small white van would be called in.

But to no avail. Cliff found an orange wire was the culprit. He watched the multi-meter and chased the orange wire around the bike. Many things attached to that orange wire, like the coils, followed by the horn, relays for the fan and fuel pump were disconnected until he followed the wires to the computer diagnostic connection plug. The multimeter went wild.

Upon further inspection it was determined that the fault lay in the diagnostic plug wiring. Yes, the computer diagnostic plug was the problem. The main wiring for the lights to the tail, brake and indicators of the V-Strom were removed and, guess what, so was the virus.

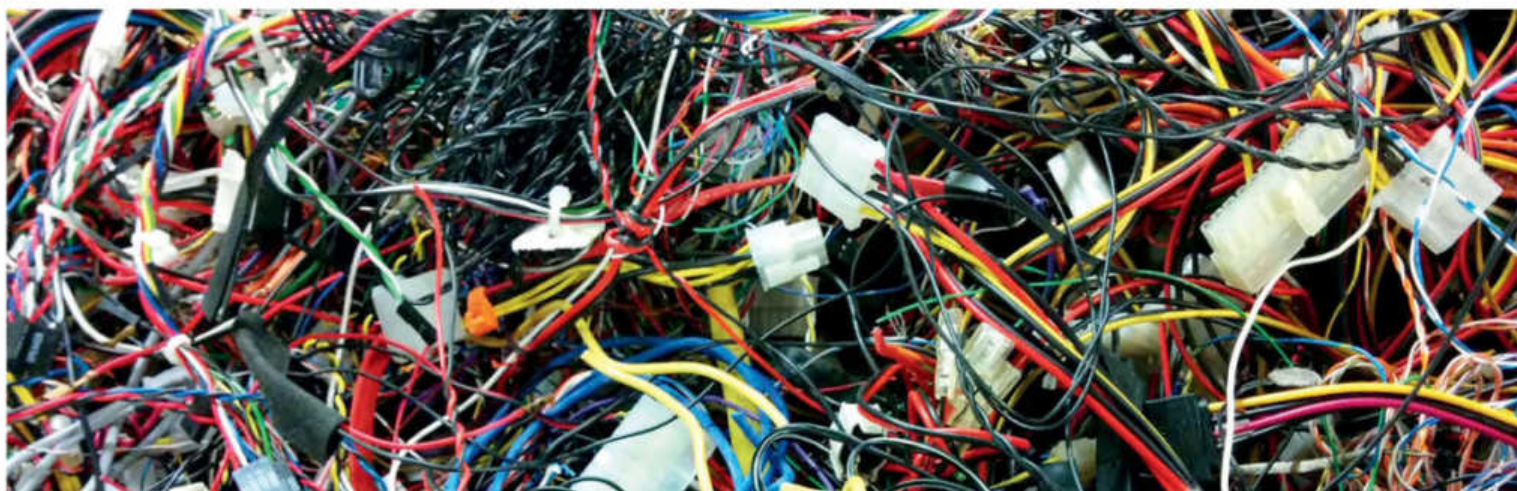
After an investigation by Cliff, a black wire was found to be even blacker due to it having let electrons (smoke) escape to the frame and it was also connected to the said orange wire.

I was not impressed but was happy to declare that the Foxy Orange Suzuki did not have a design fault but a simple assembly problem; the wiring harness was zip-tied to the frame over a sharp edge as are all DL650s as per the workshop manual!

Here endeth the saga of the electrons escaping and the moral of the story is if you own a 2012 or newer Suzuki DL 650 V-Strom, check your wiring at the point where the diagnostic plug and main wiring harness goes under the grab rail bracket with the sharpish edge. If it is zip-tied (and it will be) to the frame, cut the zip tie. It may save you having to spend near on 24 man hours to find the problem.

— ANTHONY MORRISON

"Upon further inspection it was determined that the fault lay in the diagnostic plug wiring. Yes, the computer diagnostic plug was the problem"



LOOKING BACK



INDIAN INNOVATION

Founded in 1901, Indian motorcycles have been produced in the US, rebadged in Europe and featured an at-the-time innovative chain drive and streamlined styling when first released. The company's first, and America's first, V-twin was built in 1906 and the bike was quickly put to long-haul tests and speed runs to show its speed and reliability.

The New York police department used

Indians as its first motorcycle unit and the loop frame design in 1908 was one that most manufacturers would start using over the next few years.

Indian continued to be an innovator in the early 1900s, developing the swingarm, using leaf spring suspension, electric lights and electric starter before 1916, when the company had to focus its production on supplying the war effort.

The '20s and '30s were the successful time for Indian. The Ace, Scout, Chief, Big Chief, Prince and Four were the machines that took the company to the forefront of motorcycle production in the US. Thanks to shareholder DuPont, Indian embarked on outdoing Harley-Davidson on paint schemes due to the DuPont paint that could be sourced cheaply. It allowed for 24 colour options on a new Indian in the 1930s!

LOOKING FORWARD

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ON THE BIKE

We ride Victory's limited-edition Magnum bagger, BMW's superbike-engined adventure-sports S1000XR, Yamaha's too-cool Bolt C-Spec and Suzuki's faired GSX-S1000F sports tourer.

RIDE TIME

Exploring South Africa on an Indian Roadmaster, the run from Karanda to Kyogle and the Aussie Moto Giro in Queensland.

ORIGINS

In part five of our Origins series we look at the beginnings of Custom Culture born from the ingenuity of returned US war veterans.

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